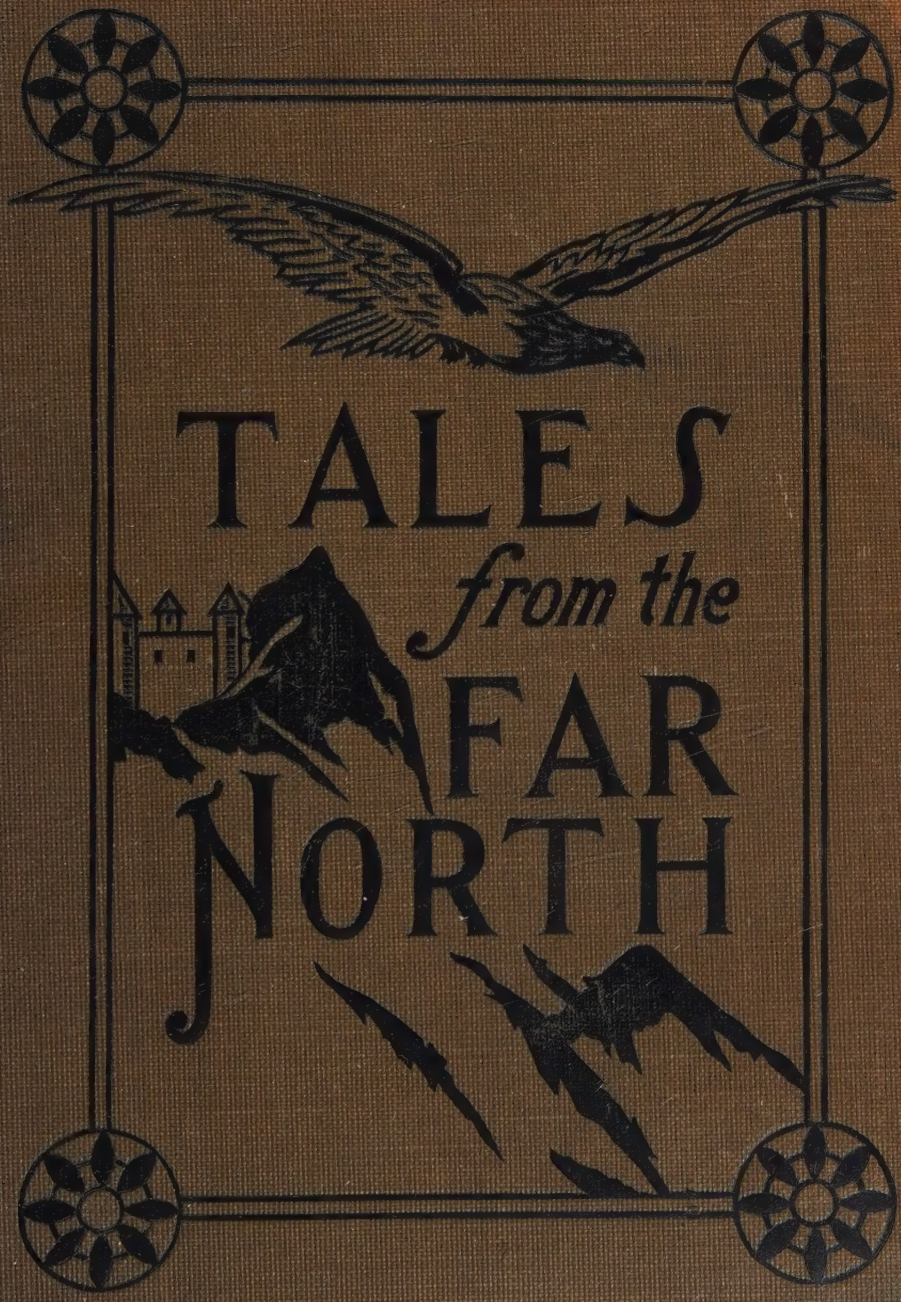

TALES
from the
FAR
NORTH

8 o'clock A.M. passed at 12:15 Friday June 13, 1925

T. Rast

Gretchen Woodward

234 Quincy ave

Fremont School.

THE MIDNIGHT SUN

TALES FROM THE FAR NORTH

BY

MARIA C. KLUGH

TEACHER IN DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Be ye then kind, as Baldur, too, was kind.
—*Matthew Arnold*

A. FLANAGAN COMPANY
CHICAGO

COPYRIGHT 1909
BY
A FLANAGAN COMPANY

CONTENTS

THE LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN 7
THE NORSEMEN 10
THE GREAT ASH TREE 13
ODIN AND FRIGGA 15
HOW ODIN BROUGHT THE MEAD TO ASGARD 18
LOKI AND HIS PETS 23
BINDING THE WOLF, PART I 26
BINDING THE WOLF, PART II 29
THOR AND HIS GOLDEN-HAIRED WIFE, PART I 31
THOR AND HIS GOLDEN-HAIRED WIFE, PART II 35
THE DWARF'S PRESENTS 37
EATING THOR'S GOATS 42
SLEEPING IN THE GIANT'S GLOVE 45
THOR'S VISIT TO THE KING OF THE FROST-GIANTS, PART I 49
THOR'S VISIT TO THE KING OF THE FROST-GIANTS, PART II 52
THOR'S FIGHT WITH THE WEAK-HEARTED GIANT 55
THE LOSS OF THOR'S HAMMER 59
BUILDING THE WALL 64
THE KETTLE MILE-DEEP 70
THOR GOES FISHING 73
CARRYING THE KETTLE HOME 76
COOKING THE OX 78
IDUN'S GOLDEN APPLES 80
HOW SKADI CHOSE A HUSBAND 84
FREYA'S NECKLACE 87
HUNTING FOR ODUR 91
LOKI AT GEIRROD'S PALACE 95
THOR'S VISIT TO GEIRROD 97

FREY AND THE LIGHT-ELVES....101
FREY AND THE FROST-GIANT'S DAUGHTER....103
HULDA AND THE GOLDEN CHIPS....107
VALI, THE YOUNG SUNSHINE GOD....109
A WONDERFUL BOUQUET....112
LORELEY....116
THE GOLDEN CURSE....119
A SWORD IN AN OAK TREE....122
SIEGFRIED IN THE WOOD....126
SIEGFRIED MAKES HIS SWORD....130
SIEGFRIED KILLS THE DRAGON....134
SIEGFRIED AWAKENS BRUNHILD....139
ASLOG AND THE HARP....142
ASLOG IN THE FOREST....146
ASLOG AND KING RAGNOR....148
HOW FRITHIOF EARNED HIS SWORD....151
THE LONGBEARDS....155
THE MAN WHO LIVED FOR THREE HUNDRED YEARS....159
HOW THE SEA BECAME SALT....163
FOUR CHARIOTS....168
BALDUR'S DREAMS....172
BALDUR'S DEATH....176
THE JOURNEY TO THE SPIRIT WORLD....180
LOKI'S PUNISHMENT....185
THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS AND THE LAST GREAT BATTLE....187
THE NAMES OF THE DAYS OF THE WEEK....193

TALES FROM THE FAR NORTH

THE LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN

When we wake in the morning to find the sun shining, how glad we are! Its bright rays bring cheer to our hearts. We feel thankful for the light and warmth which the sun gives us every day.

At night, after the sun has set, how dark it seems! But the darkness gives us no fear, for we know that day will soon come again.

In our land it is light for some part of every day, all the year round. But there is a country in the Far North where it is not light every day. The country is called Norway. For many weeks in winter the people have no daylight at all.

The boys and girls in Norway do not mind this. They have the bright stars and the northern lights to cheer them. In the Far North the stars shine very brightly. They seem so near to the earth that you might think you could reach your hand up and pick them out of the sky.

It is not always dark in the daytime in Norway. In the summer there are many long, bright days, when the sun shines far into the night. On the longest day in the year, in many places the sun may be seen shining at midnight. This longest day

is looked upon as a holiday. It is called Midsummer Eve. The people stay up all night, sitting around bonfires. They watch the sun until it just touches the horizon and then rises at once on a new day. Norway is sometimes called the "Land of the Midnight Sun."

Summer time in Norway does not last long. The people take good care of everything that grows. They hang their grain and hay on rail fences to dry. It takes hard work to get everything into the barn before the cold season.

MAKING HAY IN NORWAY

The people of Norway are fond of fish. They live near the sea, where they can get herring, cod and salmon. No part of the fish is wasted. They boil the heads of the fish in water and feed them to their cattle. The cows like this food.

There are many high mountains in Norway. Some of them are crowned with snow and ice all

the year round. No one has ever climbed to the tops of the highest mountains.

In many places the mountains rise straight up out of the sea. In other places the sea cuts into

IN A NORWEGIAN FIORD

the land. The narrow bays where the sea runs into the land are called fiords.

On the rocky sides of the mountains the sea-birds build their nests. Eagles fly to the highest peaks. At night the owls are heard, hooting in the tops of the pine trees.

Waterfalls rush down the sides of the mountains with a roaring noise into the sea. What a strange, wild country Norway is!

THE NORSEMEN

MANY hundreds of years ago, in the Far North, there lived a people called Norsemen. The Norsemen were strong and hardy. They loved the sea and spent much of their time sailing about in queer ships.

Their ships were called sea-dragons. They were built to look like great fish, with the head at one end and the tail at the other. The sails were square and made of skins brightly colored. The ships were built of the wood of the oak tree, which gave them great strength.

The Norsemen were brave and fearless. They were more at home upon the sea than on the land and often sailed away to strange countries. The leaders of these sea-rovers were called Vikings. Some people think that the Norsemen sailed over to America long before the time of Columbus. These sea kings were among our forefathers and from the stories of their heroes we may learn lessons of courage and freedom.

The Norsemen believed some queer things about the earth. They thought that the sun was a great god who lived on the top of a high mountain. They

liked the sun-god because he brought the summer to them.

The snow-capped mountains were said to be the homes of giants called frost-giants, who sometimes drove away the sun-god and made the land dark and cold.

They believed that there was a god of the sea. When the ocean was rough and the waves tossed their ships about, the Norsemen said that the sea-god was angry.

WATERFALLS EVERYWHERE

These people thought that spirits lived in the waterfalls and made the roaring noise that came from the streams which dashed down the sides of the mountains.

When they heard the owls hooting at night, the people said the wicked little dwarfs had come up from under the ground. Sometimes they went out to hunt for the dwarfs; but they could see only the great, evil-looking eyes of the owls shining in the darkness, from the tops of

the trees. The good things that came to people were sent by the fairies or elves, so they said; but no one ever heard or saw these quiet little creatures.

On the long dark winter days, the people sat around the fires. The grandmothers told stories to the children about the gods and frost-giants. When the children grew up to be men and women they told the same stories to their own children.

So, although they had no books, the stories were passed along for hundreds of years. At last an old monk wrote all the stories down and made a book of them. Now we can read the same stories that the grandmothers told so long ago.

THE NORTHERN SEAS

Up! up! let us a voyage take;
Why sit we here at ease?
Find us a vessel tight and snug,
Bound for the Northern Seas.

I long to see the northern lights
With their rushing splendor's fly,
Like living things with flaming wings,
Wide o'er the wondrous sky.

I long to see those icebergs vast,
With heads all crowned with snow,
Whose green roots sleep in awful deep,
Two hundred fathoms low.

And while the unsetting sun shines on
Through the still heavens' deep blue,

We'll traverse the azure waves, the herds
Of the dread sea-horse to view.

We'll pass the shores of solemn pine,
Where wolves and black bears prowl;
And away to the rocky isles of mist,
To rouse the northern fowl.

Then softly, softly will we tread
By inland streams to see
Where the pelican of the silent North
Sits there all silently.

—Mary Howitt.

THE GREAT ASH TREE

The Norsemen had some odd fancies about the earth on which we live. In that time of long ago, no one had thought of its being round like a great ball. People would have laughed if they had been told that it was so. They would not have believed it. The Norsemen thought that the earth was like a great ash tree.

At the top of the tree was the home of the gods, called Asgard. Below this was the land of men, called Midgard. Just across from Midgard was Giant Land. Below Giant Land was Elfland, where the fairies lived. Still lower were the Spirit World and the Land of Fiery Flames.

The ash tree had three roots which were watered by three fountains. The north root was in a fountain in Elfland.

The south root was in a deep well under Asgard. This well was watched over by three sisters, Urd, Verdandi, and Skuld. These sisters, who were sometimes called the Norns, could foretell everything that was going to happen. Every day the sisters tended the tree and when they were not caring for it they spent their time in weaving great webs across the sky. Near the mouth of the well the gods had their Judgment Hall.

The middle root of the ash tree was in a fountain under Midgard. The fountain was watched over by a wise old man whose name was Mimir. Any one who drank the water of Mimir's fountain was sure to become wise. Mimir would not let every one taste the water. He would give it only to those who were willing to give something in return for the drink.

Mimir himself took a drink from the wonderful fountain every morning. No wonder he became so wise! He could remember everything that had ever happened.

The gods had a wonderful bridge which circled around the tree. One end of the bridge was in Elfland, at the north root of the tree, and the other end was at the south root, by Urd's well. This bridge was called the rainbow bridge. It was made of fire, air, and water.

Three colors were seen in it—red, blue, and green. The red color was fire. The fire kept the frost-

giants off the bridge. Frost-giants could not pass through fire. Only the gods were allowed to cross this bridge. Any one else who wished to get into Asgard must take a long journey on foot and cross four rivers.

The gods had a watchman on the rainbow bridge. The watchman's name was Heimdall. He had golden teeth and carried a white shield. Day and night he rode back and forth over the bridge on his swift horse, Goldtop.

What a wonderful watchman Heimdall was! He needed less sleep than a bird and could see for miles around, just as well by day as by night. His ears were so sharp that he could hear the grass growing.

Heimdall had a horn which he blew when danger was near. The sound of the horn could be heard all over the world. As long as the gods had this wonderful watchman it was not easy for an enemy to get into Asgard.

ODIN AND FRIGGA

Odin was the father of all the gods. Sometimes he was called the Allfather. The Allfather carried a white shield, and a magic bow from which he could shoot ten arrows at once.

Odin had only one eye. He had given the other eye in payment for a drink from wise old Mimir's well. The magic drink had made Odin very wise.

By his words he could put out fire, quiet the rough sea, and turn the winds to do his will. He could change himself into a bird, a beast, a fish, or a serpent.

Odin had a high throne from which he could see all over the world. Every morning he sent his two ravens, Thought and Memory, off over the world. Each night the ravens came back and sat on Odin's shoulders. Then they told him what they had seen. Whenever Odin sat on his high seat his two wolf-hounds came and lay at his feet.

Odin rode a gray horse named Sleipnir. This wonderful horse had eight legs and was as swift as the winds.

The Allfather lived in a great palace called Valhalla, which stood in a grove of trees. The trees had red-gold leaves, which shone and sparkled in the sunlight.

Odin's palace had five hundred-forty doors and a large hall in which eight hundred people could sit down for dinner at one time. The roof of the palace was made of golden shields fastened together. The walls were made of flaming swords. No light was needed in Odin's palace, for the shields and swords were as bright as the sun.

Odin was the god of war. He took good care of brave people. All the warriors who were killed in battle were carried up to Odin's palace.

Odin had a great many maidens to help him

carry the warriors away from the battle-field. These maidens were called Valkyrs. They rode white horses and had feather jackets which helped them to fly swiftly through the air. When the Valkyr maidens were at home in the palace they wore long white dresses.

The warriors in Odin's palace were well fed. They ate the meat of the wild boar and drank mead. Mead was a drink which the gods made from honey. When the warriors were not eating and drinking, they spent their time in fighting sham-battles. No one was ever hurt in these battles.

Odin's wife was named Frigga. She was goddess of the clouds. Like the clouds, her dress was sometimes dark and sometimes white. No matter which dress she wore, her shoes were always golden.

Frigga had a palace of mist by the sea. There she spent much of her time spinning beautiful golden thread. Her spinning-wheel was covered with jewels. How it did sparkle as the busy goddess made it fly round and round!

The cloud-goddess was a good housekeeper. She carried a large bunch of keys at her side.

Frigga was a kind mother to her children. She had one blind son named Hodur. Her favorite child was Baldur, whose face was so bright and shining that he was called the sun-god. Baldur never spoke an unkind word to any one. He was the best loved of all the gods.

ODIN

Ah! no traveler art thou,
King of men, I know thee now,
Mightiest of a mighty line—.

—Thomas Gray: *Descent of Odin.*

HOW ODIN BROUGHT THE MEAD TO ASGARD

The honey drink which the gods called mead had first been made by the little dwarfs who lived under the ground. The mead was a magic drink. Whoever took a sip of it was able at once to compose beautiful music and write poems. For this reason every one wished to have a taste of it. There is a story about how the mead was first brought into the city of the gods.

A frost-giant named Suttung stole the mead from the dwarfs and hid it in his cellar. There it was watched by the giant's beautiful daughter, Gunlad. Day and night she sat by the side of the three great jars in which the mead was kept. The cellar wall was of solid rock.

One day Odin's two ravens spied out where the giant had hidden the mead. At night, when they came home to rest on the Allfather's shoulders, they told him about the three jars in Suttung's cellar. Odin was fond of music and poetry, so he thought he would try to get some of the mead for the gods.

The Allfather set out the next morning. He

walked all day over dusty roads until he came to the giant's house. It was nearly night when he knocked at the door.

Suttung was not at home, but his brother, whose name was Baugi, opened the door.

"I am a poor working-man," Odin said. "I am looking for a place to rest over night."

"Come in," said Baugi. "You may rest here until my brother, Suttung, comes home."

Baugi looked at Odin and saw that he was large and strong. Then he said:

"We need some men to work on the farm this summer. How would you like to stay here?"

"I will stay and work on the farm," Odin answered, "if you will give me the pay that I ask of you."

"We can not pay much," the brother said, "for we need nine men to do the summer's work."

"I will stay all summer and do the work of nine men," said Odin, "if you will give me the pay that I ask."

"What pay do you wish?" asked Baugi.

"Only a little drink of the mead which the giant keeps in his cellar," Odin answered. "That is all that I ask for my summer's work."

Baugi was surprised to find that the working-man knew about the mead, but he said:

"If you do the work of nine men, I will try to get some of the mead for you."

Soon Suttung came tramping into the house. The brother told him that he had hired a man to do the summer's work. Sutting was pleased to hear this and said that the man might stay.

All summer Odin worked in the giant's fields. He did the work of nine men and more. By the end of the summer the work was all done and everything was in the barns, ready for winter.

One night at supper Odin spoke boldly to the giant.

"The summers' work is done, Suttung," he said, "I must go home to-morrow. Give me my pay to-night."

"What pay did my brother agree to give you?" the giant asked.

"My pay for the summer's work," said Odin, "is to be a drink of the mead which you keep in your cellar."

At these words, the giant jumped up from the table and roared:

"You shall never have a drop of the mead! It is no promise of mine. Now go!"

Odin went out, but he stayed near the house until the next morning. At daylight, Baugi came out to see what he could do for the working-man.

"You promised me a drink of the mead," said Odin. "The giant will not pay me. I have done the work; now I shall help myself to the pay."

Then he walked over to the wall of the cellar.

"SWEET MAIDEN, GIVE ME SOME OF YOUR MEAD TO DRINK"

He pulled an auger from under his cloak and began to bore a hole in the solid rock. Baugi laughed.

"You will never get in there," he said.

But he stopped laughing when he saw the wonder-

ful auger fly round and round. Soon there was a small round hole clear through the rock. When Baugi turned to speak to the working-man, he could not find him, but near the hole in the rock a little worm crawled.

Odin had changed himself into a worm. He crawled into the cellar. There sat the giant's daughter, watching the three jars of mead. She did not see the little worm.

Then Odin changed himself into a handsome young man. He smiled and bowed and said:

"Sweet maiden, give me some of your mead to drink."

Gunlad was so much pleased to see the young man that she answered:

"I will give you some of the mead if you promise to take only three drinks."

Odin promised. At the first drink he emptied the first jar; at the second drink he drained the second jar; and at the third drink all the mead in the cellar was gone. Then he changed himself into a little worm again and crawled out through the hole. Outside sat Baugi, wondering where the working-man had gone.

Odin now changed himself into an eagle. He flew off to Asgard with the mead, and there the magic drink was kept ever after.

LOKI AND HIS PETS

ASGARD was in a pleasant valley near the top of a high mountain. There, among the green groves, the gods had built their golden palaces and lived happily together.

Of all the gods, there was but one who was not content in his happy home. This was Loki. Loki was an idle god. He never had any work to do; so he often got into mischief.

Loki had a face that was fair and good to look upon; but his heart was filled with the spirit of mischief. He began by making fun of everything. Then he forgot how to be kind and how to tell the truth. He got himself and every one around him into trouble. He was called the "mischief-maker" and the "father of lies."

Loki was fond of taking long walks among the mountains. Once, when he was roaming about, he found a young serpent. He brought the serpent home with him, but he was afraid to show it to the other gods, so he made a place for it in a cave just outside of Asgard.

Not long after this, Loki found a young wolf in the woods. He took the wolf to the cave where he had hidden the serpent. There he kept his strange pets. Every morning he went to the cave to feed them. He called the wolf Fenris.

One day Loki made up his mind to take his pets into Asgard. He took his little daughter with him, too.

When the gods saw the queer pets, they were frightened. They went to Father Odin and told him about them.

HE TOOK HIS LITTLE DAUGHTER WITH HIM, TOO

"We can not have those ugly creatures in the Golden City," they said. "Our children can not go out to play while a serpent crawls in the streets."

"Loki may keep his child and the wolf," Father Odin said, "but the serpent must go."

All the gods were glad to hear this. Odin took the serpent up to his high seat, from which he could see all over the world. He threw the serpent far away into the middle of the ocean.

The gods felt better when the serpent was gone. But a strange thing happened. The serpent lived in the ocean and began to grow. It grew so large that its body reached all around Midgard, the land of men. Then it was called the Midgard serpent. When the serpent had reached quite around the world, it could grow no more and had to keep biting its own tail.

All this time Loki's daughter had been growing, too. What a queer-looking creature she was! One side of her body and face was black and the other side was as white as a sheet. None of the gods liked to look at her.

Odin thought of a plan to get rid of Loki's daughter. He called Loki to him and said:

"If you will take your daughter out of Asgard, I will make her Queen of the Spirit World."

Loki was willing to do this. He took his daughter to the land of spirits. There she was called Queen Hela, and sat upon a throne.

The Spirit World was not a pleasant land. It was covered with dark forests of bare trees and had a high wall all around it. To reach the land of spirits, it took many days of travel over rough, icy roads. Then a river must be crossed.

There was but one bridge over the river. It was made of crystal and hung by a single hair. A skeleton kept guard over the bridge, and would allow none but spirits to pass over. A fierce dog named Garm watched at the gate of the Spirit World.

The spirits of those who died of sickness or of old age went to Hela's country. When a person died of sickness or of old age he was said to have died the "straw death." The spirits of those who died fighting in battle went to Odin's palace, as you have heard. For this reason all Norsemen wished to die in battle.

Every one liked to think of living in Odin's shining palace, but no one cared to go to Hela's dark land.

BINDING THE WOLF

Part I

When Loki first brought the wolf Fenris into Asgard, it was young and harmless. The gods were kind to Fenris and fed him so well that he soon grew strong and large.

As Fenris grew larger, he became very fierce. Then the gods were afraid to go near him. Tyr,

the brave sword-god, was the only one who dared to feed the wolf.

At night Fenris kept the gods awake with his howling. In the daytime he walked up and down the beautiful streets of Asgard. The gods were in fear of the wolf whenever they went out-of-doors. Their children could not go out to play while the fierce creature was loose in the streets.

The gods went to Father Odin and said: "We must get rid of Fenris. Let us kill him."

"We must not kill the wolf," the Allfather said, "because it is a law of the gods that blood shall not be spilled in Asgard."

Then Tyr, the brave sword-god, spoke thus:

"If we may not kill the beast, let us at least chain him so that he can not run about the streets."

The gods thought this a wise plan. A strong iron chain was made. Every one said that it could not be broken. But how were they to get the chain on Fenris? This is what they did.

They went to the wolf and said:

"Fenris, we know that you are a very strong wolf. Let us try your strength with this iron chain. We will bind it around you, and, if you can break it, everybody will praise your great strength."

Fenris liked to have the gods praise him, so he stood still while they bound the iron chain around him. Oh, how safe the gods felt when the chain was fastened!

But a strange thing happened. The wolf began to tug and pull. Before any one could say a word the chain was broken to pieces and bits of iron were scattered about. Fenris was free.

The gods ran back to their golden palaces. They kept their children in-doors. The wolf prowled about the streets just as before.

After a time Father Odin called the gods together.

"Fenris is much stronger than we supposed him to be," he said. "We must make a heavier chain."

So the gods set to work. For many days and nights they hammered at the second chain. The noise of the pounding could be heard all over the city. When at last the chain was done, it was so heavy that it took many men to lift it. Nothing like it had ever been seen before.

The gods went to the wolf a second time.

"Fenris," they said, "here is another chain. Let us try your strength with this one. If you can break it, we shall know that you are the strongest wolf in the world."

Fenris was willing to try, so the gods bound the great chain around him. They smiled as they saw him tug and pull at the chain, for they thought it could not be broken.

Fenris growled and roared and pulled. Then a cracking sound was heard and pieces of iron were seen flying over the city. The second chain was broken. Fenris was loose again.

With sad faces the gods went to their palaces. They walked no more in their shady groves among the trees with the red-gold leaves. The wolf, alone, walked about in Asgard, fiercer than ever.

BINDING THE WOLF

Part II

The gods knew now that the wolf could not be bound by any common chain. They sent a servant to the dwarfs, to ask them to make a magic chain with which to bind Fenris.

The little dark elves went down into their homes under the ground and soon came back with a wonderful chain which they had made. They gave it to the servant, who took it up to the gods.

The chain was a queer-looking one. It was as small and soft and fine as a silk cord. The dwarfs said that it could not be broken, for it was made of six very queer things: the roots of mountains; a woman's beard; the voice of fishes; the breath of a bear; a cat's footsteps, and the teeth of birds.

The gods watched for a chance to fasten the magic chain around the wolf, but he kept away from them. Then they thought of a plan.

They invited Fenris to a picnic. This pleased him and he went to it. The picnic was held on an island in the middle of a great lake. There they played games and had a fine feast.

When Father Odin saw that every one was having a good time, he went to the wolf and said:

"Fenris, you have broken two iron chains. We know that you are very strong. Let us try your strength once more. Look at this little chain. It does not seem strong; still, none of the gods can break it. Show us what you can do."

Fenris seemed to know that something was wrong.

"I will not be bound with the little chain," he said, "unless one of the gods will hold his hand in my mouth to show that no harm is meant."

The gods looked at one another. Which one would hold a hand in the fierce beast's mouth? Whoever did so would be sure to have his hand bitten off when the wolf found himself fast.

Tyr, the brave sword-god, stepped forward.

"I will hold my hand in the wolf's mouth," he said. "I am not afraid."

Then Fenris was bound with the magic chain. The gods wound it all around his body. Fenris pulled and tugged. He jumped and rolled and twisted. He could not break the fine little chain.

When the wolf knew that he was fast, he snapped his jaws shut and bit off Tyr's right hand at the wrist. After that Tyr had to carry his sword in his left hand and fasten his shield to his right arm.

Fenris began to howl and roar. Oh, what a noise he made! He shook the whole earth. To stop the noise the gods put a sword in the wolf's mouth.

The hilt of the sword rested on the lower jaw and the sharp point pierced the upper jaw. There was no more howling.

Before the gods left the island, they fastened the end of the chain to a rock. Then they went home and left Fenris alone.

At last the gods were safe from the wolf, but poor Tyr had lost his right hand. How grateful the other gods were to him for saving them! They did not forget his bravery. On the blade of every sword was engraved Tyr's name.

THOR AND HIS GOLDEN-HAIRED WIFE

Part I

The strongest of all the gods was Thor, the thunder-god. He was so large and heavy that he did not dare to walk on the rainbow bridge for fear that he would break it.

Thor traveled about in a heavy brass chariot, which was drawn by two goats and made a noise like thunder as it rumbled along. The goats were named Tooth-cracker and Tooth-gnasher. From their teeth and hoofs sparks kept flying as the spry creatures raced across the fields and over the roads.

The thunder-god had red hair and a red beard. Sparks of lightning flashed from his head. He wore a magic belt which made his strength just double what it was without.

THOR, THE THUNDER GOD

In his right hand Thor carried a wonderful iron hammer. The hammer was always red hot and was sure to hit whatever mark it was thrown at. Besides this, it would always return to the hand of its owner. In another story we shall hear how this wonderful hammer came to Thor.

Thor wore a pair of iron gloves when he was using his hammer. The gloves made him still stronger. Thor's red-hot hammer meant death to the frost-giants. You may be sure they ran when they heard the thunder-god coming.

Thor's wife was named Sif. Sif had beautiful golden hair. She was very proud of her hair, for it was so long that it reached down to her feet. Thor, too, was proud of his wife's beautiful hair.

One morning, when Thor awoke, he looked at Sif. A strange sight met his eyes. All of her beautiful hair was gone! He thought he must be dreaming, but it was true. Some one had cut off Sif's hair in the night.

When poor Sif found that her hair was gone, she began to cry.

"Oh, what shall I do?" she said. "The gods will laugh to see me without any hair."

"Don't cry, Sif," said Thor. "I will find out who cut off your hair."

Thor knew that there was only one god mean enough to do such a thing. He started to look for Loki, the mischief-maker. He hunted all over Asgard.

At last Thor found the wicked fellow hiding in a dark corner. He seized Loki by the throat. The thunder-god was so angry that he nearly choked the mischief-maker to death.

Loki was well frightened for once. He begged Thor to let go his hold.

"If you will only let me go," Loki said, "I will get your wife some hair more beautiful than that which I cut off."

So Thor let Loki go, but he said:

"Loki, poor Sif is sitting at home crying because of your cruel trick. You must have the new hair ready for her by the end of the week. If you fail to be on time, you shall lose your head."

THOR

I AM the God Thor,
I am the War God,
I am the Thunderer!
Here in my Northland
My fastness and fortress,
Reign I forever!

Here amid icebergs
Rule I the nations;
This is my hammer,
Miölner, the mighty;
Giants and sorcerers
Can not withstand it.

These are the gauntlets
Wherewith I wield it
And hurl it afar off;
This is my girdle;
Whenever I brace it,
Strength is redoubled!

The light thou beholdest
Stream through the heavens,
In flashes of crimson,
Is but my beard
Blown by the night-wind,
Affrighting the nations!

THOR AND HIS GOLDEN-HAIRED WIFE

Part II

As soon as Loki was free, he left Asgard. He ran straight to the forest, where he thought he might find some of the dwarfs who lived under the ground. Loki waited in the forest until dark. He knew that the dwarfs would not come out in the daytime, for they were afraid of the light. If a dwarf came out during the day he was sure to be turned to stone.

After it began to grow dark, Loki saw a queer little dwarf coming toward him. The dwarf had a large head, brown skin, and little green eyes that sparkled in the darkness. His legs were much too short for his body. The dwarf's name was Dvalin.

Loki called the little fellow to him and told him all about his trouble. He asked Dvalin to make some new hair for Thor's wife.

"I must have the hair before the end of the week," Loki said, "or I shall lose my head. The hair must be long and yellow. Can you make it?"

"Oh, yes," said the dwarf. "I can make the hair. Come to this same spot to-morrow night and the wig shall be ready for you."

The next night Loki was back on time, waiting for the dwarf. Soon he saw Dvalin's little green eyes shining in the dim evening light. True to his word, the dwarf had the wig of hair with him. The

THE WIG WAS MADE OF FINE THREADS OF PURE GOLD

wig was made of fine threads of pure gold. The dwarf gave the hair to Loki and then ran back into the wood.

Loki went as quickly as he could up to Asgard. When he reached Thor's house, he found Sif still crying about the loss of her hair. She dried her eyes when she saw the golden wig.

Thor placed the golden hair on his wife's head, and stepped off to see how it looked. Then a wonderful thing happened. The hair of gold began at once to grow on Sif's head, just as though it had always belonged there. Sif was all smiles again.

All the gods came to look at the hair of pure gold. Loki was glad to get off so easily, but the gods did not quite forgive him. They could not feel safe while the mischief-maker was around.

THE DWARF'S PRESENTS

After Loki had brought the wig of gold hair to Sif he thought he would try to get some presents for the other gods. So he went again to the forest to see the little dwarf Dvalin. He asked the dwarf whether he could make anything else as wonderful as the golden hair.

"If you can wait a few days," Dvalin said, "I will make you some presents to take to the gods."

"I will gladly wait," answered Loki. "When shall I come for them?"

"Just one week from to-night," said Dvalin, rolling his little green eyes. Then he ran off into the thickest part of the forest.

At the end of the week the presents were ready. Loki carried them up to Asgard and gave them to Odin.

The first present was a magic ship. It was so small that it could be folded up and carried in the pocket when it was not needed. When the gods wished to use the ship, it would spread out large enough to carry them all.

The most wonderful thing about the ship was that it made its own breezes. The gods need never wait for a good wind to blow.

Father Odin named the ship Skidbladnir.

The second present was a sharp sword, which was always sure to hit the mark. Odin gave this present to Tyr, the brave sword-god, who had lost his hand in the wolf's mouth.

All the gods praised the dwarf for the wonderful presents which he had made. Loki went about boasting that Dvalin did better work than any of the other dwarfs.

There was one of the dwarfs who did not like to hear all the praise given to Dvalin. This dwarf's name was Sindri. Sindri went to Loki and said:

"Let me make some presents for the gods, too. I can make more wonderful presents than Dvalin made, and my gifts will be more useful."

Loki said: "I am sure you cannot make anything more wonderful or more useful than the ship Skidbladnir. Still, you may try. I will give you a week in which to make the presents. Then we will take them up to Asgard and give them to the All-father. If the gods say that anything you have

THE MAGIC SHIP, SKIDBLADNIR

made is more wonderful or more useful than Dvalin's presents, you may have my head."

Loki ran off laughing, but Sindri called after him, "I shall hold you to your word, Loki."

Sindri went to work at once. At the end of the week the gifts were finished. Sindri helped Loki take them up to Asgard. They laid the gifts at Odin's feet.

The father of the gods thanked Sindri for the presents and then looked first at a large animal. It was a wild boar.

"What is so wonderful about this creature?" asked Odin.

"That," said Sindri, "is a golden boar. Its bristles are made of pure gold. There will never be any darkness where the boar is, for its gleaming body gives out a light like the sun. More than this, the boar can run like the wind, as well on the sea as on the land."

"Very good," said Odin. Then he picked up a gold ring. "Tell me," he said, "of what use is this plain gold ring?"

"The ring," answered Sindri, "is more wonderful than it appears. Once in every nine nights another ring just like it will drop from it."

"Very strange," said Odin as he placed the ring on his little finger.

He looked at an iron hammer next. "Now tell me the use of this iron hammer," he said.

"The hammer," replied Sindri, "is the most wonderful of all. It will keep red hot whenever it is in use. It never fails to hit the mark and will always return to the hand of its owner."

Odin was pleased with each of the presents. He asked the other gods which of the presents of the two dwarfs would be of most use to them. They said that the wonderful hammer would be the most

useful of all, because it would help them to drive away the frost-giants.

"You have chosen wisely," the Allfather said. "The frost-giants are becoming bolder every day. Perhaps we shall now be able to get rid of them."

Odin gave the hammer to Thor, the thunder-god, who always after this carried it with him.

When Loki saw that the gods had chosen Sindri's hammer as the most useful of all the presents he feared for his life. He had promised to give Sindri his head if they chose one of this dwarf's presents and he knew that Sindri would hold him to his promise. Being a coward, Loki ran off and hid himself.

The dwarf said that it was not fair for Loki to run away when he had made a promise. "I did not expect to find a coward among the gods," said he. When Thor heard about the promise, he said: "A coward Loki surely is, but he shall be caught and made to keep his promise." Thor at once went after Loki and brought him back to Odin's palace.

When the dwarf saw Loki coming back, he sprang at him and was about to cut off his head, but Loki cried out: "Stop! You shall not touch my neck! I promised you only my head."

Then Sindri saw that he was beaten, for he could not take Loki's head without cutting his neck. The dwarf went off in a rage, but Loki's head was saved.

EATING THOR'S GOATS

ONE day in early spring, Thor heard that the frost-giants were sending cold winds over the land. The frosty breezes were nipping the buds and killing the grass just as everything was beginning to grow nicely.

Thor started off in his goat-chariot toward Giant Land, where the frost-giants lived. He would kill the giants with his red-hot hammer.

As he was setting out, Thor saw Loki, the idle god, sitting by the roadside, and called to him. Loki ran after the chariot and jumped in. Then Thor touched the two goats with the whip and they were soon on their way toward the North.

All day Thor and Loki traveled over the rough country. At night they came to the edge of a great forest. Here they saw a peasant's hut. The long ride had made them both tired. They stopped and Thor jumped out of the chariot. He knocked at the door of the hut. A poor peasant opened the door.

"We are travelers on our way to Giant-Land," Thor said. "We should like to rest here all night and get some supper."

"You are welcome to sleep here all night," the peasant said, "but we can not give you any supper. We are very poor people and have just given the last bit of food we had to our children."

"Oh, there will be no trouble about the supper," said Thor, laughing. "I will get the meat if you will make a hot fire."

The peasant set about making the fire, but he wondered where the meat was coming from. Thor called to Loki to kill the two goats. It did not take Loki long to do this. Then Thor, took the goats into the hut and gave them to the peasant's wife saying: "Cook these goats for our supper, but save the skins and be careful not to break any of the bones."

When the meal was ready Thor invited the peasant's family to eat with him. They all sat down together. There were two children, a little girl named Röska and a boy named Thialfi. The children had never tasted goat's meat before.

Loki, the mischief-maker, sat next to the boy at the table. While the others were talking together, Loki whispered to Thialfi:

"Taste the marrow in the bone, Thialfi. That is the sweetest part of the meat."

Thialfi broke his bone to get at the marrow. How sweet it tasted to him!

The next morning Thor woke Loki early and told him to get the chariot ready. The peasant watched Loki as he pulled the chariot around to the door.

The peasant wondered how they could use the chariot when the goats had been killed and eaten for supper. He soon found that his visitors were not common men.

Thor gathered up all the bones of the goats and laid them upon the skins which he had spread on the ground. He waved his hammer over the bones and spoke a few words. At once the goats came to life again and jumped up, just as lively as ever.

But as Thor looked at them he saw that one of the goats was lame. He knew by this that some one had broken a bone at supper the night before. The thunder-god flew into a rage. Sparks of lightning were seen about his head. He raised his hammer and said that he would kill the whole family.

The peasant was much frightened, for he thought they must all die. Just then, Thialfi stepped up to Thor and said:

"Do not kill my father and mother and little sister. They are not to blame. I broke the bone to get at the marrow. Kill me, but do not harm the others."

Thor was so much pleased with the boy's courage, that he forgot his anger. He changed his mind and promised that he would not kill any of them. Then he said to the peasant:

"You may well be proud of your son. He is a brave boy, for he is not afraid to tell the truth. I will take him with me to fight the frost-giants."

"Thialfi will be glad to go with you, Thor," the peasant said, "but his sister Röska will be very lonely without him."

"Let Röska come, too," said Thor.

How happy it made the children to hear they might go with the thunder-god!

Thor could not use his chariot this time, because of the lame goat. He left the chariot and the goats with the peasant, who promised to take good care of them. Thialfi and Röska said farewell to their parents and started with Thor and Loki for Giant Land.

SLEEPING IN THE GIANT'S GLOVE

The road to Giant Land ran through the forest. It was a long road. Although Thor and Loki and the children traveled on it all day, at night the end was not yet in sight.

Darkness came on while the travelers were still in the forest. They could no longer see the road. So they stopped and looked about for a place in which to sleep.

Presently Thialfi called out that he and Röska had found an empty house. Thor and Loki stumbled around until they came to the door. They went in and felt their way about in the darkness.

The house seemed to have five rooms, opening on a large hall.

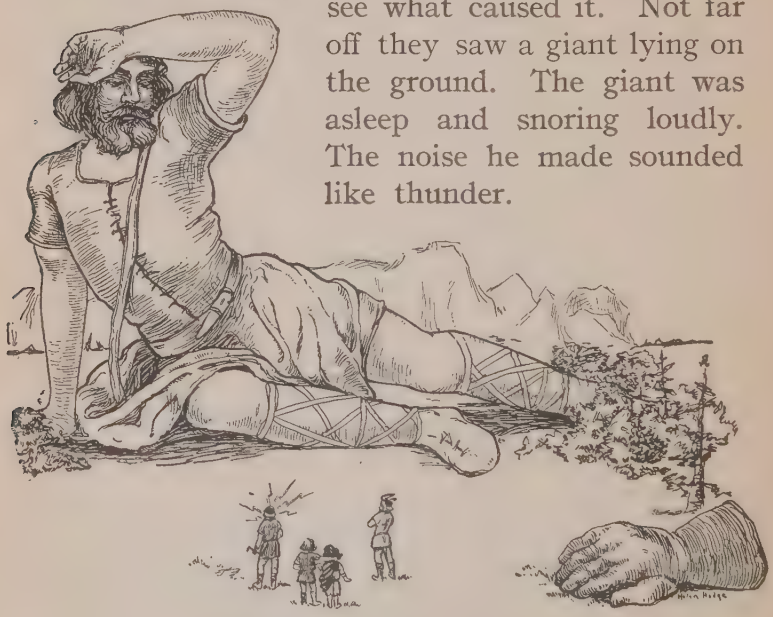
"This must be a big house," Thialfi said. "Here is the largest room. Let us lie down in it."

So they slept in the largest room all night.

At daylight Thor awoke. He felt the house

shaking and heard a loud rumbling noise outside. He called to Loki and the children to wake up. They were all so frightened that they ran out of the house without stopping to look back.

The noise grew louder. They looked around to see what caused it. Not far off they saw a giant lying on the ground. The giant was asleep and snoring loudly. The noise he made sounded like thunder.



AFTER A WHILE HE AWOKE

They watched the giant. Even Thor and Loki seemed tiny beside him. After a while he awoke. When he saw Thor and Loki and the two children he spoke in a loud voice to them.

"Who are you," he asked, "and what are you doing here?"

"We are travelers on our way to Giant Land," Thor answered. "We have been sleeping all night in a house in the forest."

"There is no house in this forest," the giant said.

Then Thor turned to point to the house in which they had slept during the night. Now that he saw it by daylight he knew that it was not a house at all. It was the giant's glove that they had stumbled into in the darkness. They had spent the night in the thumb of the glove.

How the giant laughed when Thor told him they had thought it a house!

"I, too, am going to Giant Land," said he, getting up from the ground. "I will show you the way if you wish to come with me."

Thor thanked the giant and said they would be glad to travel with him. The giant turned to Loki, who held the bag of food, and said:

"Let me carry your bag for you."

Loki was glad to give the bag up, for he had found it quite heavy. The giant threw it into his own large bag. He tied a string around his bag and started off with the load on his back.

What long steps the giant took! Thor and Loki had to run to keep up with him and the children could hardly help falling behind.

At noon the giant stopped in a grove of trees.

"I feel sleepy," he said. "I think I will take a nap. Here is the bag of food."

Then he threw himself on the ground and was soon fast asleep and snoring.

Thor and Loki and the children were hungry. They tried to untie the string which was around the bag of food. They could not do it. They pulled and pulled, but it was of no use.

Thor called to the giant to wake up and open the bag so they could get something to eat. The giant kept on snoring.

Thor was angry. He threw his hammer at the giant and hit him in the middle of the forehead. The giant opened one eye and said in a sleepy voice:

"Was that a leaf that fell on my head?"

In a moment he was snoring again.

This made Thor still more angry. He again threw his hammer, with great force, at the giant's head. This time the giant opened his eyes half-way and said:

"I think I felt an acorn fall on my head from the trees above me."

Then he fell sound asleep once more.

Thor was now in a rage. With all his might he threw his hammer a third time. It struck the giant's forehead and the giant turned over. He looked surprised and said:

"Thor, did you see a bird's nest fall on my head?"

Before Thor could answer, the giant rose up. He took his bag from the ground, and started off, never once looking behind him.

There was nothing for Thor and Loki and the

children to do but follow the giant. They ran after him until they reached the land of the frost-giants.

Then they stopped to gaze at the walls of ice and snow which surrounded Giant Land. When they turned to look for the giant, he was gone. They never saw him again.

THOR'S VISIT TO THE KING OF THE FROST-GIANTS

Part I

Thor and Loki had never been in the land of the frost-giants before. It was a strange country. All about they saw ice and snow. Snow-flakes were flying through the air.

Thor started out to look for the palace of the king. Loki followed with the children. The palace was not far away. They soon came to it. It was a large white building made of blocks of ice. The posts of the gates and the doors were huge icicles.

Thor and Loki went into the palace. They saw the king of the frost-giants. He was sitting on his throne, which also was made of ice. It was at the end of a long hall. Icicles hung from the ceiling.

The king had a crown of ice on his head. His coat was made of soft snow-flakes and his shoes were cut from blocks of ice. In his hand he held a long icicle for a scepter.

When the king saw the strangers, he asked:

"Pray, who are you and what brings you to the land of the frost-giants?"

Thor answered: "I am the thunder-god. I have come with my friends to visit you."

"We have heard of you, Thor," said the king. "We have been told that you are very strong. Let us test your strength."

Thor answered that he would try his strength on anything in the palace.

The king pointed to the darkest corner of the room and said:

"There is my cat, Thor. See whether you can lift her."

Thor thought he could easily lift the cat. He put both his strong arms around her, but, although he pulled with all his might, he could raise only one paw from the floor. He could not get the cat out of the corner.

"I see that you can not lift the cat, Thor," the frost-king said, "Perhaps you would like to try your strength on something else."

He beckoned to an old woman who stood near the door.

"Thor," he said, "this old woman was my nurse when I was a baby. Let me see whether you can throw her down on the ground."

Thor was sure that any man could throw an old woman down. He tried, but he could not move

HE COULD RAISE ONLY ONE PAW FROM THE FLOOR

her. The old nurse brought Thor down on his knees.

"The old woman is too strong for you, Thor," said the frost-king. "Now let us see how much water you can drink. Here is my large drinking-horn. Try to empty it."

Thor held the drinking-horn to his lips. He took a long drink. Then he looked into the horn. He

thought he must have emptied it, but he was surprised to see that there was just as much water in it as at first. He took two more drinks, but he could not empty the horn.

"You are not very thirsty to-day," said the frost-king. "What will you try next?"

Thor answered that he had done enough and would not try anything else.

"Then let me see what your friends can do," said the king.

Thor told the king to try Loki.

THOR'S VISIT TO THE KING OF THE FROST-GIANTS

Part II

Loki was fond of boasting about what he could do. He said that he could eat faster than any one in the palace. When the frost-king heard this, he called to one of his servants and told him to bring in a trough full of meat. The trough was made of wood, and was so long that it reached all the way across the great hall. The meat was piled up in it.

The king placed his servant at one end of the trough and told Loki to start at the other end.

"Now," said the king, "let me see which of you will be first to eat up to the middle."

Loki and the servant began at the same time to eat the meat. Soon they had both eaten up to the

middle. Then Loki looked up. He saw that, while he had eaten only the meat, the servant had eaten the trough as well. Loki knew that he was beaten.

"You can not be very hungry to-day, Loki," said the king. "What else can you do?"

Loki was afraid that he might be beaten twice, so he said that he was too tired for any more games.

Thialfi now offered to run a race. The king called to one of his servants to race with Thialfi. They went outside to run.

"The race will be from the palace to the gate," said the king. "The gate will be the goal."

Thialfi was a swift runner, but he had gone only half-way when he saw that the servant had reached the goal. Thialfi did not like to be beaten.

Thor now spoke to the king of the frost-giants, saying: "Since we have failed to win any of the races, we will go home."

The king went with them to the gate. Before they parted, he said:

"Do not feel angry because you failed to win, Thor. You were not so badly beaten as you seemed to be. No wonder you could not empty the drinking-horn! One end of it was in the ocean. You drank so much water that many large rivers dried up.

"The cat was really the Midgard serpent which reaches around the world and bites its own tail.

"The old nurse was old age. No one can drive off old age.

"The servant who beat Loki eating was wild-fire, which eats up everything in its path.

"When Thialfi ran the race, he was racing with the wind, which no man can outrun."

The king went on: "When you met the giant in the wood, Thor, you would have killed him with your hammer, if I had not placed a mountain over his head. As it is, you made three great valleys in the mountain.

"You are much stronger, Thor, than we thought. It is not safe for us to have you in Giant Land. You will never be allowed to come into our country again."

Thor was very angry to find that tricks had been played on him. He raised his hammer to kill the king of the frost-giants. But just then a cloud of snow-flakes fell upon them. The snow-flakes were so thick that Thor could not see anything.

When the snow-storm had passed, the frost-king was gone and Thor and Loki and the children were far away from Giant Land in a field of green grass. They tried to find the king and his ice palace again, but they could not. They went home without killing any of the frost-giants.

On the way back Thor stopped at the peasant's hut and left the children with their parents. Thor found that the lame goat was better: so he said

farewell to Thialfi and Röska, and he and Loki went back to Asgard in the goat chariot.

ODE TO THE NORTHEAST WIND

Welcome, wild northeaster!
Shame it is to see
Odes to every zephyr,
Ne'er a verse to thee.
Welcome, black northeaster!

Come! as came our fathers,
Heralded by thee,
Conquering from the eastward,
Lords by land and sea.
Come; and strong within us
Stir the Vikings' blood;
Bracing brain and sinew;
Blow, thou wind of God!

—Charles Kingsley.

THOR'S FIGHT WITH THE WEAK-HEARTED GIANT

Thor was fond of driving about the country in his goat chariot. Wherever he went he kept a sharp watch for the frost-giants. He wished to get into Giant Land again.

The frost-giants tried to lead Thor away from their land whenever he came near. They knew that the red-hot hammer meant death to their icy hearts.

Once, when Thor was driving through the forest

POOR THOR LAY IN GREAT PAIN UNDER THE GIANT'S FOOT

in the Far North, he met a party of frost-giants. He began to make fun of them, calling out:

"Are you afraid of the thunder-god? Why do you try to keep him away from Giant Land? Why do you not come out and fight him?"

The frost-giants answered from afar:

"You shall not come into our country, Thor, as long as we can help it, but we will send one of our largest giants to fight you."

"The thunder-god will fight any one in Giant Land," Thor shouted back. "Send a giant to this wood a week from to-day, early in the morning." Then he drove on.

When the day came, the largest of the giants went to the forest. His name was Hrungnir. He was so large that he could look over the tops of the tallest trees. Every one feared Hrungnir because of his great size.

The giant waited for Thor in an open place in the wood. When he heard the thunder-god coming, he began to tremble and shake: for he had a weak heart in spite of his great size. He was not at all brave.

Hrungnir feared that Thor might rise up suddenly out of the earth. So he laid his shield on the ground and stood on it. Then he closed his eyes. He was afraid to look around.

Thor did not come out of the ground: but rushed up from in front and threw his red-hot hammer at the giant's heart. Hrungnir raised his stone club

to keep off the hammer, but he could not save himself.

The giant was killed. His stone club was broken to pieces, which flew all about. One of the pieces of the giant's club hit Thor in the forehead. Thor and the giant fell down together.

Thor's friends came to help him, but the friends of the frost-giant fled into the woods.

When the gods came near they saw that Thor was held down by one of the giant's huge legs. They tried to lift the giant's foot so that Thor could get up. The foot was too heavy for them. They could not move it. They pulled with all their might, but it was of no use. Poor Thor lay in great pain under the giant's foot.

Just then Thor's little son Magni came along.

"I can raise the giant's foot," he said. "Why did you not call me?"

Little Magni went up to his father and lifted the giant's foot as easily as though it had been a feather. All the gods thought this a wonderful thing, for Magni was only five years old.

Everybody said that when Magni grew up he would be stronger than his father. Thor was proud of his little son.

"Magni," he said, "you have saved your father's life. You shall have a present. Take the giant's horse, Goldflax, for your own."

Now nothing could have pleased Magni more than

to have a horse of his own. He jumped on Goldflax and rode off, feeling very happy.

The piece of stone in Thor's forehead began to pain him. He tried to get it out, but he could not. He went to the wise men and women, to see whether they could help him.

No one could get the piece of stone out. Ever after Thor went about with the stone splinter in his forehead. He never forgot his fight with Hrungnir, the largest of the frost-giants.

THE LOSS OF THOR'S HAMMER

One morning when the thunder-god awoke, he could not find his hammer. He knew that he had not lost it, for the night before he had laid it, with his belt of strength and his iron glove, at his side. The belt and the glove were still there, but the hammer was gone.

Thor could not get along without his hammer. He hunted everywhere for it, but he could not find it. No one had seen it and no one could tell him anything about it.

Then Thor went to see the mischief-maker. He thought that Loki must have taken the hammer, but Loki said:

"I have not seen your hammer, Thor, but I will help you find it."

Loki thought of a way to find the hammer. He

made a visit to Freya, the goddess of beauty and of the spring. Freya had blue eyes and golden hair and was said to be the most beautiful goddess in Asgard. She had a long coat made of eagle feathers. Any one who wore the feather coat could fly like a bird.

Loki told the goddess that Thor had lost his wonderful hammer and would not be able to drive off the frost-giants without it. He said:

"If you will lend me your feather coat, Freya, I can fly all over the earth. Perhaps I may find the hammer."

Freya was glad to help Thor, so she let Loki take her feather coat.

Loki flew to all parts of the world, hunting for the lost hammer. He heard that the prince of the frost-giants had stolen the hammer while Thor was asleep, and had hidden it under the ground in Giant Land.

Loki went at once to the palace of the frost-prince and asked him to give the hammer back.

"I will return the hammer," the frost-prince said, "if you will promise to give me beautiful Freya for my wife."

"I can not promise you that," said Loki, "unless the goddess herself is willing; but I will do my best for you."

Loki flew home to Asgard and told Thor how they could get the hammer back.

Thor and Loki went together to the beautiful

Freya and begged her to become the wife of the frost-prince.

"I will not marry the frost-prince," Freya said. "I will never go to live in that cold land."

They tried to make the goddess change her mind, but she would not listen to them.

As they walked away Loki said to Thor:

"We can never get Freya to marry the frost-prince. We must try another plan. I will tell you what to do. Put on Freya's long feather coat and her veil and necklace. Then we will go to the frost-prince. He will think that you are the bride."

So Thor dressed up in Freya's clothes. He put a thick veil over his face. Loki sent word to the frost-prince to make ready for the wedding.

When Loki and the bride reached the palace, the frost-prince was waiting to meet them. He took them into the palace, where a great feast was spread They all sat down to eat.

The bride surprised every one at the table by eating a whole ox. Loki saw all the giants watching and he said to the frost-prince:

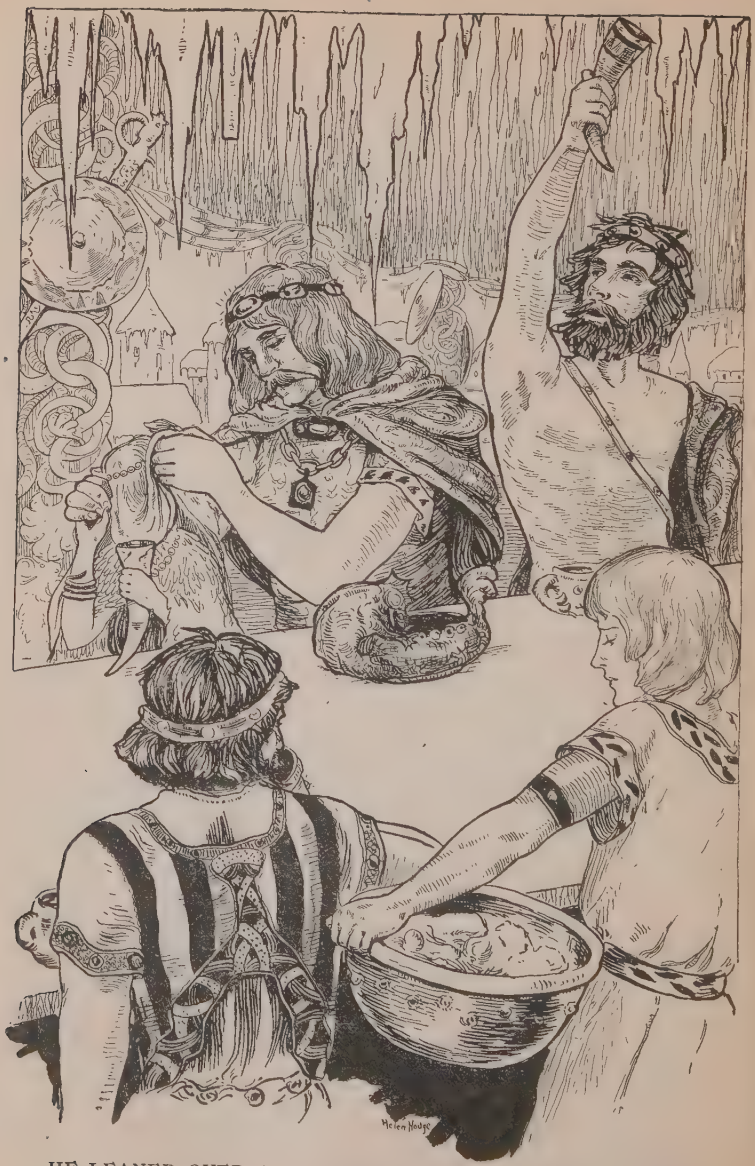
"You must excuse the bride for eating so much. She has been fasting and is very hungry."

The frost-prince sat next to the bride. He leaned over and lifted her veil just a little.

"Oh," he cried,"what bright eyes she has!"

"That is because she is so happy," Loki replied.

"What large hands she has!" said the frost-prince.



HE LEANED OVER AND LIFTED HER VEIL JUST A LITTLE

"She will be able to help you with your work," said Loki.

"Why does she not talk?" asked the other frost-giants.

"Oh, she is very bashful," answered Loki.

Then the frost-prince told his friends not to worry the bride. He sent for the hammer, and when it was brought to him, he laid it in the bride's lap.

Thor seized the hammer. He pulled off the veil and the feather coat. There stood the thunder-god, wearing his belt of strength and his iron glove. Sparks of lightning flew out from his red hair.

Thor threw the hammer at the heart of the frost-prince. The prince fell dead. Then Thor threw his hammer quickly at each of the other frost-giants. He killed all the frost-giants that were in the palace.

Before he left, Thor set fire to the palace with his red-hot hammer. Then he and Loki went home to tell what they had done. How glad the gods were to know that the hammer was safe again! Afterward, Thor planted a grove of trees to mark the place where the palace of the frost-prince had stood.

FREYA

Out of the morning land,
Over the snowdrifts,
Beautiful Freya came
Tripping to Scoring.
White were the moorlands,
And frozen before her;

Green were the moorlands,
And blooming behind her.
Out of her gold locks
Shaking the spring flowers,
Out of her garments
Shaking the southwind,
Around in the birches
Awakening the throstles.

—CHARLES KINGSLEY: *The Longbeards' Saga.*

BUILDING THE WALL

AT ONE time the gods were much troubled by the frost-giants, who would come so near to the Golden City that the buds and leaves were nipped by their icy breath.

Father Odin saw that something must be done. He called all the gods to his palace and said:

"Our enemies, the frost-giants, have become very bold of late. Each night they come nearer to the Golden City while we are asleep. What shall we do?"

The gods thought for a while, and then they said:

"Let us build a great wall that shall reach around our city and close it in on all sides."

"That is a good plan," replied the Allfather. "But who will build the wall?"

Just as Odin asked this question, the door opened and in walked a stranger. He was tall and strong-looking, but he did not have a pleasant face. He spoke to the gods thus:

"I am a builder from a far country. I will build your wall. In three winters it shall be finished."

The gods then asked the builder what pay he wished for his work.

"This shall be my pay," answered the builder. "You must give me the goddess Freya for my wife, and the sun and moon for my own."

The gods told the builder that they could not get along without the beautiful goddess, nor would they give up the sun and moon. The builder then went away, saying that he would return the next evening.

After the stranger had gone, the gods began to plan again about the wall. They wished very much that they might have the builder do the work for them, but he asked too great a price.

While they were talking Loki came in. He had heard about the strange builder.

"How fine it would be to have a wall around the Golden City!" Loki said. "How safe we should feel! We could sleep in peace on our golden couches if we had this wall."

While Loki was speaking some of the gods began to think, as the mischief-maker did, that it would be a fine thing to have the builder make the wall for them. The more they thought about it, the more sure they became that they must have the wall. They almost forgot about the great price to be paid.

Father Odin shook his head sadly when he saw that the gods were set on having the stranger build

the wall, for he knew that they could not get along without the sun and moon and Freya.

"Three winters is a long time to wait for the building of the wall," he said. "Many things may happen in three winters. Let us tell the builder that he must finish the work in one winter, if he is to build the wall for us: and let us also make him agree not to have any help in his work."

The gods all thought this a wise plan. Odin took heart again, for he felt sure that the stranger would never agree to build the wall in one winter without the help of any one; and so Freya and the sun and moon might be saved after all.

The next night, when the builder came again, the gods told him their terms. To Odin's surprise, the stranger said:

"If you will surely give me Freya and the sun and moon, I will build the wall in one winter, but I must have my horse, Swadilfari, with me."

Now Odin did not wish to agree to let the builder have his horse with him, but Loki whispered to the gods that a horse could not be of much help in building a wall. At last they agreed to let the builder keep his horse.

The next day the builder began work.

He worked day and night. At night he drew great loads of stone with the help of his horse, Swadilfari. In the daytime he set the stones in place.

When the gods saw the size of the loads which the horse drew, they were surprised. The work on the wall went along rapidly By mid-winter the wall was half-way around the city.

Then the gods began to fear that they might have to give the builder the pay for which he had asked. As the days went by, they became more and more uneasy. What if they should have to give up Freya, their beautiful goddess? What if they should never see the sun and moon again?

At last the wall was finished except for the gate. Only three days were left till summer. What could the gods do?

They sent for Loki and said to him:

"See what trouble your plan has brought us! In three days we must lose Freya and the sun and moon unless we can keep the builder from finishing the gate. You have gotten us into this trouble, Loki, and now you must find a way to get us out of it, or we will take your head."

Loki did not wish to lose his head, so he made a plan to save Freya and the sun and moon for the gods.

The next night, when the builder and his horse were starting to haul stones for the gate, Loki changed himself into a pretty little pony with shining mane and tail.

The pony stood in a field near the builder and began to neigh. The horse Swadilfari, hearing the

THEN THE CHASE BEGAN

neighing, left his work and ran to find the pony. The pony galloped off into the woods, with Swadilfari following.

When the builder saw his horse running away he ran after him. Then the chase began. Swadilfari ran after the pony and the builder ran after Swadilfari. They kept this up all night and part of the next day.

Late the next afternoon the pony disappeared and the builder caught his horse. When the builder at last returned to the wall, he was so tired that he had to sit down and rest. The horse was tired, too.

All the gods came out to see what the builder would do. Only one day was left. The builder saw that he could not finish the gate. He must lose Freya and the sun and moon, although he had worked hard the whole winter. When he thought of this, it made him so angry that he rose up and began throwing stones and rocks at the golden palaces of the gods.

The gods were now trembling with fear. The whole city would soon be destroyed. Just at this time Thor, who had been off on a journey, returned. The thunder-god saw the trouble. As soon as he looked at the builder, he knew him to be a frost-giant.

Thór hurled his red-hot hammer at the giant. The hammer went straight to the frost-giant's heart. The great fellow rolled over on the ground, dead.

The gods set to work at once to build the gate themselves. It was soon done and they were safe at last from the frost-giants.

THE KETTLE MILE-DEEP

ONE day the gods were planning to have a feast. They were to dine on a great fish which the sea-god, Ægir, had caught. When the fish was ready to be cooked, the gods found that they had no kettle large enough to hold it. Then Tyr, the sword-god, said:

"I know where we can get a large kettle. There is a frost-giant, named Hymir, who owns a kettle so large that it is called 'Mile-Deep.' The giant lives near the sea-shore."

Thor offered to go with Tyr to ask the giant for his great kettle. They set off together in Thor's goat chariot. They rode until they came to a forest. There they saw the peasant's hut at which they had stopped once before.

The peasant saw them coming and opened the door.

Thor said: "We are on our way to the sea-shore. We must get to the other side of the forest before night. The goats are tired and the road through the forest is not good. We should like to leave the goats with you."

The peasant said that he would take good care of them.

So Thor and Tyr went on foot through the forest. The tall trees growing so closely together made the forest dark and gloomy. It was not easy to find the

way because of the thick bushes which had grown over the path.

After a time, Thor and Tyr could smell salt in the air. By this they knew that they were near the sea-shore. As soon as they were out of the woods, they saw the giant's house.

Thor went up to the door and rapped on it. The giant's wife came out. Thor told her that they had come to ask Hymir for the kettle, called "Mile-Deep."

"Hymir is not yet home from his fishing in the sea," said the giant's wife, "but he will be here soon. He is always tired and cross when he first comes in, and if he sees you he may kill you. You must hide under one of those kettles until he is rested."

As she spoke she led the way to a row of large kettles which hung from a rafter at the far end of the room. In these kettles the giant cooked the large deep-sea fish which he caught.

Thor and Tyr crept under the largest kettle and waited. Soon they heard the giant coming. He rushed into the house with a great noise. He was so tall that his head touched the ceiling. He looked cross and he grumbled about his poor luck in fishing.

After a while the giant became quiet. Then his wife said:

"Hymir, would you like to see some visitors to-night?"

Hymir shouted, "No!" in a voice so loud that the whole house shook. The rafter on which the kettles

SHE LED THE WAY TO A ROW OF LARGE KETTLES WHICH HUNG FROM A RAFTER

hung broke in two, sending the kettles to the floor with a crash. All the kettles were broken to pieces except the one under which Thor and Tyr were hiding. This was the kettle Mile-Deep, which was so large that it rested on the floor and so was not harmed by the breaking of the rafter. Thor and Tyr crawled out from under Mile-Deep.

Hymir was in a rage when he saw the visitors and the broken kettles. But when he found that his visitors were gods, he treated them kindly.

Thor and Tyr, for their part, were so frightened that they did not dare to ask for the kettle Mile-Deep at this time. They told the giant that they had stopped to rest at his house until the next day.

Hymir then invited them to have supper with him. They sat down to eat. Thor was so hungry that he ate two whole oxen. The giant was surprised. He, too, was hungry, but he could not eat so much as Thor.

When supper was over, the giant's wife cleared off the table. Then they all went to bed.

THOR GOES FISHING

The next morning Thor and Tyr awoke early. The salt air made them hungry. They sat around, waiting for breakfast.

Hymir, seeing them waiting, said: "Thor, you ate so much for supper last night that I will not try

to feed you again. This morning you must fish for your breakfast."

"Very well," said Thor, walking away toward the sea-shore. The giant followed with the fishing-lines.

When they had reached the boat, Thor asked Hymir for some bait.

"Get your own bait," said the giant, crossly.

"It will not take me long to do so," answered Thor.

In a field near by the giant's cattle were grazing. Thor ran to the field. He twisted off the head of the largest bull and came back with it.

"Here is my bait," he called out to Hymir. He threw the bull's head into the boat. Hymir did not like to have his best bull killed, but he said nothing.

Hymir told Thor to row the boat. Thor took long strokes with the oars and soon had the boat far out at sea.

"Stop!" cried the giant. "You have rowed far enough."

"Oh, no!" said Thor. "The water is not deep enough here for my fishing." So he rowed on until they were in the middle of the ocean.

Then they began to fish. The giant threw out his line. He caught two large whales. Thor baited his hook with the bull's head and threw his line into the deepest water.

Far down in the ocean, the great Midgard serpent, which reached all around the world and could bite

its own tail, was looking about for something to eat. The serpent spied the bull's head and swallowed it with Thor's hook.

Thor was glad when the bait was taken, for he had often wished to catch the Midgard serpent. The great creature gave a quick jerk at the line, nearly tipping the boat over. Thor held on to the line. He stood up in the boat and pulled so hard that his feet broke through the bottom and he had to stand on the bed of the ocean.

The serpent tried to swim off with the bait. Thor was in great danger of being pulled along with the line, but he used all his strength and held back.

Just then the giant saw the danger. He feared that something worse might happen, so he cut Thor's line with his knife. The serpent swam off with the bait. It made Thor angry to lose the serpent.

The giant put the two whales over his shoulders and waded to land, stepping over great waves at each stride. Thor picked up the boat and carried it to shore. It was no longer of any use, for the bottom had been broken out, but Thor wished to show the giant that the thunder-god was not to be beaten in strength.

Thor was very sorry that he had not caught the Midgard serpent. He made up his mind to try again some day.

CARRYING THE KETTLE HOME

After the giant had seen Thor's great strength in fishing for the serpent, he was afraid of him. He praised the thunder-god. He said he was glad to have so strong a visitor in his house. He invited the two gods to come to visit him again.

Thor and Tyr thought this a good time to ask for the kettle, Mile-Deep. So Thor said to the giant:

"Hymir, the gods are making ready for a feast, and are in need of a large kettle. Will you not give us your kettle Mile-Deep for a present?"

"I do not like to part with it," answered the giant, "but will give it to you on one condition. If you can break the golden goblet out of which I drink, I will give you the kettle."

"Show me your goblet," said Thor. The giant brought it from the closet where it was kept.

"I see nothing wonderful about that golden goblet," Thor said, "Why should it be so hard to break?"

"That is for you to find out," answered Hymir. "Many giants have tried to break my golden goblet, but have not been able to do so."

Thor wished to get the kettle Mile-Deep, so he took the goblet in his hands and threw it with all his strength against the wall. It did not break. Then Thor threw the goblet at a hard rock, but it was not harmed the least bit. Once more he tried, this

time throwing it against the iron kettle. Still it was not broken.

Thor gave the goblet to Tyr, who tried to break it. But he could not break the goblet. The gods feared that they must lose the kettle.

Just then the giant's wife came up behind Thor.

"Try throwing the goblet at Hymir's forehead," she whispered. "That is the only thing hard enough to break it."

Thor picked up the goblet again and threw it with all his might at Hymir. It struck the giant's forehead and broke into a thousand pieces.

The giant was in a great rage. Thor and Tyr went straight for the kettle. They lifted it up and pushed it through the door. The kettle was so large that they broke the floor of the giant's house in getting it out.

Thor and Tyr ran into the forest with the kettle. Hymir ran after them. He called to the other frost-giants to come to his aid.

When Thor heard all the frost-giants coming after him, he turned and faced them. He set the kettle on the ground and threw his red-hot hammer at them. The hammer struck Hymir in the heart. The ugly old fellow fell dead.

When the other frost-giants saw that Hymir was dead, they ran back toward Giant Land.

Thor would have gone after them, but he remembered that the gods were waiting for their feast. He

picked up the kettle Mile-Deep and put it over his head. It covered his whole body.

Tyr ran ahead to tell the gods that Thor was coming with the kettle. The gods came to meet Thor. How they laughed when they saw him with the kettle over his head! But they helped to carry the heavy load.

It did not take long to build a fire under the kettle and cook the sea-fish. Then began the greatest feast the gods had ever had.

COOKING THE OX

Once Loki and two of his friends went out hunting in the forest. They lost their way and wandered about for a long time. By and by they became hungry. Not far off they saw some oxen grazing.

Loki ran up to the herd and killed the largest ox. He brought it back to his friends and together they built a big fire of dry branches and logs. They put the ox over the fire and sat down to rest while the flesh was cooking.

When they thought the ox had cooked long enough they took it off and made ready to eat. But the flesh was not cooked. It was just as raw as if it had not been on the fire at all.

So they put the ox on the fire a second time and sat down to wait. After a while they tried the flesh again, but it was still raw. They were just

wondering what they should do, when they heard a voice in the tree above them.

Looking up, they saw a large eagle in the topmost branches. The eagle said, "If you will give me my fill of the ox, it shall be cooked."

They agreed willingly to this, saying:

"You shall have your fill; only let the ox be cooked quickly."

For a third time they placed the ox on the fire. In a little while the flesh was cooked. Then the eagle came down for his share. He was so greedy that he ate the two shoulder pieces and two legs.

This made Loki angry, for those were the best pieces. He picked up a long pole which lay on the ground, and struck the eagle just as it was flying off. Then a strange thing happened. The pole stuck to the eagle and Loki stuck to the pole. The mischief-maker could not get loose.

Away they went, over hills and mountains and rivers. Loki was dragged through the tree-tops and now and then he struck a sharp rock as he was carried over a mountain. He would cry out in pain, begging the eagle to let him go.

Now the eagle was not what he seemed to be. He was really an old frost-giant named Thiassi.

"I will let you go," said Thiassi, "if you will promise to get me some golden apples from the goddess Idun."

Loki promised.

"Only let me go," he said, "and to-morrow I will bring some of the golden apples to the wood outside the gates of Asgard."

When the eagle heard this, he dropped Loki down into a grassy field. The mischief-maker ran home to bathe his bruised body and plan how to get the golden apples from the goddess Idun.

IDUN'S GOLDEN APPLES

THE apples which the beautiful goddess Idun carried about with her were very wonderful. Whoever ate of them would never grow old. The goddess kept them in a pearl box.

Every day the gods went to Idun for some of the golden apples and in that way they kept themselves young. No matter how many apples Idun gave to the gods, there were always just as many in the box as at first.

Now the frost-giant Thiassi had heard about the golden apples. As he was beginning to look old, he wished for some of them. So he made Loki promise to get him some.

The next day Loki went for a walk in a garden where he knew he would find Idun. When he saw her, he called out: "Sweet goddess, pray give me some of your golden apples."

"You do not need any of the apples, Loki," Idun replied. "You are still young."

HE SHOWED HER A CRAB-APPLE TREE

Loki saw that he could not get the golden apples from the goddess, so he said:

"If you will not give me any of your golden apples, I will go where I can get some that are better than yours."

"Where is that?" asked Idun.

"Oh, on a tree outside the gates of Asgard," Loki answered. "Come with me and I will show them to you."

Idun did not believe what Loki told her, but she went with him out of the city. Loki took the goddess a long way off into the wood. He showed her a crab-apple tree. Then he ran off, laughing at the trick he had played.

Idun was left alone. It was getting dark and she did not know the way home. How tired she was! She sat down on the ground to rest.

While Idun was resting, the wicked frost-giant Thiassi came along. He had been waiting for Loki. He saw that the beautiful goddess was alone and that she had her box of golden apples with her. He carried her away to Giant Land.

Thiassi took Idun to his ice palace. The goddess did not like to stay there. She cried to go home. Her pretty face was red with crying.

Thiassi begged Idun to give him some of the golden apples to make him look young and handsome. Idun would not give him even one apple.

Up in Asgard, the gods did not at first miss Idun. They thought she had gone off on a visit. After a while they saw themselves becoming old and wrinkled for want of the golden apples. Then they began to hunt for the goddess. She could not be found.

The Allfather sent for Loki. He asked the mis-

chief-maker to tell what he knew about Idun and the golden apples.

Loki saw that he must speak the truth to the Allfather, so he said:

"I helped the frost-giant Thiassi to steal Idun and her apples."

"Loki," the Allfather said, "we are tired of your mischief! You shall lose your head if you do not bring back the goddess and her golden apples by to-morrow evening."

Loki was sorry now that he had helped the frost-giant to steal Idun. He feared that he could not get the goddess back. But he thought of a plan. He went to Freya, and borrowed her feather coat.

Loki flew straight to the palace of the frost-giant. Thiassi was not at home, but poor Idun was sitting in the doorway, crying. Loki saw her and called out:

"I have come to take you home, Idun. We must go while Thiassi is away."

Before Idun could say a word, Loki had changed her into a nut and started to fly back with her to the gods.

Thiassi saw Loki flying through the air. He feared that a trick was being played on him. So he changed himself into an eagle and flew after Loki.

Then the race began. Loki flew as fast as he could toward Asgard. He was ahead, but the eagle was gaining on him.

The gods saw Loki coming and the eagle chasing him. They built a hot fire just outside the gates of the city near the rainbow bridge.

Loki flew nearer and passed through the fire safely. The eagle flew after him until he came to the fire. As soon as the frost-giant was touched by the flames and smoke, he fell to the ground, dead.

Loki changed Idun back from a nut into a goddess again. How happy the gods were when they saw Idun with her golden apples! They all cried out: "Oh, Idun, give us some of the apples quickly! See how old and wrinkled we look!"

Idun gave the gods as many apples as they could eat. They were soon as young as ever, but they could not forget Loki's mischief.

HOW SKADI CHOSE A HUSBAND

After the frost-giant Thiassi had been dead a few days, his daughter, Skadi, began to wonder why he did not come home. She feared that something had happened to her father, for she had never been left alone in the ice palace for so long a time before. So she put on her hunting-dress and started out to look for her father.

Skadi wore a short white hunting-skirt, and long white fur leggings. She carried a glittering spear and a bow from which she shot sharp-pointed arrows. She could run like the wind.

The frost-princess soon learned that her father had been killed by the gods. She went at once to Asgard. The gods saw her coming and waited at the gate to meet her.

Skadi was not afraid of the gods. She spoke to the Allfather and said:

"Great Odin, I have come for my father's body, and to ask payment from you for his loss."

"We can not give you Thiassi's body," Odin said, "for he was burned to ashes in the fire outside the gates of the Golden City. It was his own fault that he was killed. He saw the fire and went into it, trying to catch Loki."

When Skadi heard that her father had been burned in the fire, she began to cry. Great tears rolled down her white cheeks. Her voice was choked with sobs so that she could not speak.

The gods felt sorry to see the frost-princess weep, and Odin said:

"Dry your tears, Skadi. We will try to help you because of the loss of your father. We have placed Thiassi's eyes in the sky where you may always see them shining. Besides this, you may choose a husband from among the gods."

At these words, Skadi dried her eyes and looked more cheerful.

"Come to the gate to-morrow morning," said Odin, "and you may take your choice."

All that night Skadi kept thinking about the gods.

Which one should she choose? Which one would she like best for her husband?

She had heard of Baldur, the sun-god, and knew that he had a beautiful, smiling face. She thought that she would like Baldur better than any of the others.

The next morning Skadi went to the gates of Asgard. Sure enough, there were the gods, all standing in a row along the wall, waiting for one to be chosen. But as Skadi came nearer she saw that in front of the gods was hung a curtain. Only their bare feet could be seen below it.

Father Odin spoke for the gods.

"Skadi," he said, "it would be a hard matter for you to choose one from among the gods, if you should

"I CHOOSE THIS GOD FOR MY HUSBAND"

see their faces, for they are all young and handsome. So they have covered their faces and hands. You must choose a husband while seeing only their feet."

Skadi agreed to this. She said to herself:

"Surely the beautiful sun-god, Baldur, must have beautiful feet."

So she pointed to the feet that were whitest and slimmest and most beautiful.

"I choose this god for my husband," she said.

The god with the beautiful feet stepped out. He uncovered his face. It was not Baldur, but Niord, the wind-god, who could blow the sea into great waves and make the ships roll.

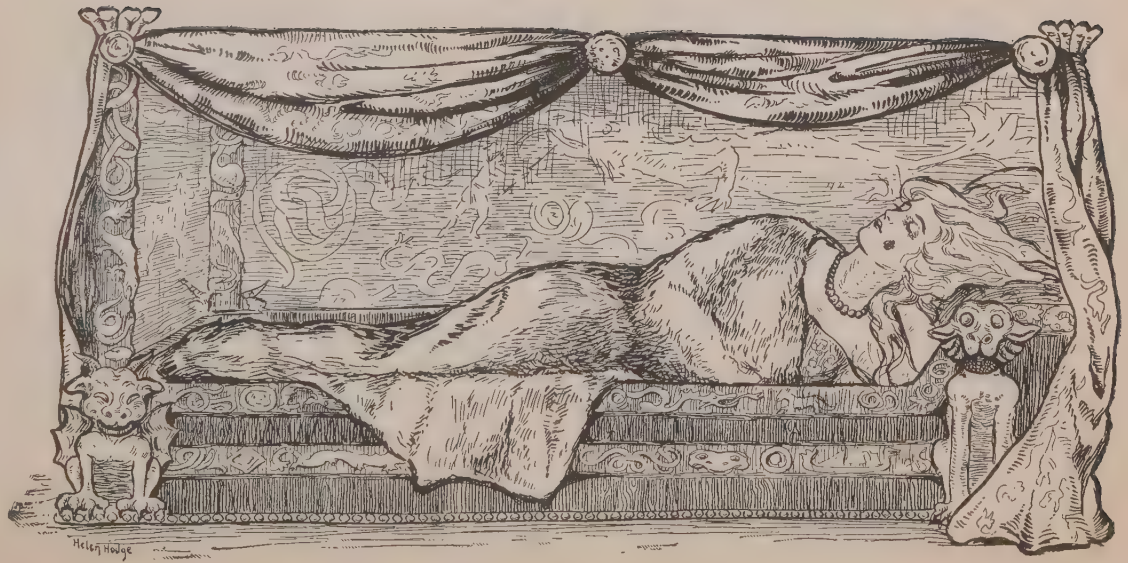
For a moment Skadi was disappointed, but when she saw that Niord was tall and handsome and had a kind face she forgot about the sun-god.

Skadi and Niord went off to Giant Land, where for many years they lived happily together.

FREYA'S NECKLACE

THE goddess Freya had a necklace of gold. It had been made by the dwarfs and given to the beautiful goddess for a present. She wore it at all times clasped around her pretty white throat. She did not take it off even at night, for fear some harm might come to it.

Loki had often admired Freya's golden necklace. Each time he saw the goddess the necklace looked



THE WICKED FELLOW BIT THE GODDESS ON THE CHEEK

brighter to his eyes. He began to wish that he might have it for his own. An evil plan came into his mind.

This is what Loki did. He went to Freya's palace at night and tried to get in. But the goddess had locked the doors and Loki could not open them.

So the mischief-maker changed himself into a fly and flew through the window of Freya's bed-room. There he saw the beautiful goddess lying asleep on her bed. There, too, was the golden necklace, fastened about her throat. How it sparkled and shone in the moonlight! He must have it.

He flew to the bed and hovered over the goddess. He tried to unfasten the necklace, but he could not, for Freya was lying with the clasp under her head. So the wicked fellow bit the goddess on the cheek. This made her turn over in her sleep, but did not waken her. Then Loki took the necklace, and, changing himself back to his own form, ran out.

It was midnight and the gods were asleep in their palaces. But there was one god who never slept. This was Heimdall, the wonderful watchman on the rainbow bridge. He was keeping guard over the Golden City. His sharp eyes saw the mischief-maker running off with Freya's necklace.

Heimdall chased the thief. He caught up with Loki and drew his sword out to strike. Just as Heimdall did this, Loki changed himself into a flame of fire and leaped into the sky.

Heimdall quickly took the form of a cloud and poured down a heavy shower of rain on the fire. Seeing the rain coming, Loki changed himself into a great polar bear which opened its mouth and drank the rain.

Heimdall was not to be outdone by the mischief-maker. He changed himself into a larger polar bear, which chased the smaller one. Then Loki changed himself into a seal, but Heimdall became a larger seal.

Loki saw now that it was of no use to try to get away. The two seals fought together. Heimdall was the stronger and soon Loki was begging to be let off. The mischief-maker gave up the necklace and then ran away. He was glad to get off with his life.

Heimdall started back toward the Golden City to return the necklace to Freya. He was weak and faint after the fight. At the gate he met Idun with her box of golden apples. The goddess was taking her morning walk.

Heimdall asked Idun to give the necklace to Freya. Idun was glad to do this. Before they parted, Heimdall ate one of Idun's golden apples. He felt stronger at once. Then he hastened back to his place on the rainbow bridge.

Idun took the necklace to Freya's palace. There she found the beautiful goddess still sleeping. Idun awoke Freya and told her how near she had come

to losing the necklace. You may be sure that Freya was glad to get her treasure back and that she went at once to thank Heimdall for what he had done.

HUNTING FOR ODUR

THE beautiful goddess Freya was loved by every one who knew her. It is said that each of the gods had at some time in his life asked Freya to become his wife; and many a frost-giant had done likewise. But Freya seemed not to care to marry any of them.

All the gods had given up trying to win Freya except Odur, the young god of the summer sun. Odur set his heart on having Freya for his wife and made up his mind to keep asking the goddess until she promised to grant his wish.

Odur was a tall, handsome young god and had very pleasing manners. He followed Freya wherever she went. He whispered sweet words to her and made her pretty speeches. Freya liked to hear Odur's voice and was glad to have him near her. At last she promised to become his wife.

The gods were very much surprised when they heard that Freya had married the young god of the summer sun and that she had taken him to live with her in her fine golden palace; but they were glad to know that the beautiful goddess was happy.

For a time all went well with Freya and her young husband, and the two might have lived happily

together all their lives if it had not been for one bad habit which Odur had.

The young god was a rover. He was not content to stay very long in any one place. Freya had known this when she married him, but she had thought that Odur loved her well enough to stay always at her side.

One morning when Freya awoke, she found that Odur had gone away. How sad she was to think that he would leave her! Still, she did not lose hope, for she said:

"Odur may not be far away and I shall soon find him."

Freya went to all the gods and asked whether they had seen anything of her dear Odur. Not one of them could give her any news of the summer-god. They shook their heads sadly as they looked at the pale cheeks of the goddess.

Then Freya said: "I must find Odur and bring him back. I do not care to live if he is not near me."

So she put on her feather jacket and flew over the fields and hillsides. As she flew she felt the winds become chilly. Looking over the land, she saw that the leaves were falling from the trees and that the flowers were drooping from the sting of the frosty air.

"Everything is sad," said Freya, "even as my heart is, because Odur has gone away."

The goddess flew on until she was too tired to go farther. She could not find Odur, but she said:

"I will not give up. I must find my dear one, even if I spend all the rest of my life hunting for him."

When the goddess was rested she returned to her palace to make ready for a long journey. She brought out her chariot and called to her two white cats. She always rode in this chariot drawn by the two cats when she went far away from home.

The cats could run like the wind and never become tired. Freya said farewell to the gods. She was not sorry to go away, for she could not be happy without Odur.

The goddess felt very lonely as she rode along. The chilly wind blew her golden hair about her face. Her heart was sad. She began to weep. The tears rolled down her cheeks and were blown away by the wind.

A strange thing happened when Freya's tears fell to the ground. Every tear-drop turned to gold.

Freya rode to all parts of the world. She cried all the time, for she could not find Odur. Many golden tears were dropped in strange countries all over the earth; and this is how it comes about that gold is found in so many places.

At last Freya reached a land in the far South. There, in a green grove, she found Odur sitting under a flowering myrtle tree. How glad she was to see him again!

SHE CRIED ALL THE TIME

Freya took Odur in her chariot with her, and the two cats drew them back to the Golden City. As they passed into the northern countries, the ice and snow melted, the waterfalls danced over the rocks, the birds sang, and green leaves came out on the trees.

Everything became joyful at Odur's return.

How glad the gods were to see Freya and the long-lost Odur! Freya was the happiest of all, for Odur had promised never to leave her again.

LOKI AT GEIRROD'S PALACE

THE idle god Loki was one day looking about for some new mischief that he might do. His eyes fell upon Freya's feather jacket. The goddess had thrown her jacket upon the grass while she went for a morning bath in the brook.

Loki put on the feather jacket and flew off through the air. He flew toward Giant Land. Far away to the north he saw a palace. Smoke was coming out of the chimney.

Loki flew to the palace. He perched on the top of the chimney and tried to look inside and see what was going on. He could not see anything.

Just then the giant Geirrod, who lived in the palace, came out. Seeing the large bird, he called to one of his servants to catch it. The servant climbed to the highest window. Loki, thinking to have some fun, flew down quite near the servant. With a quick spring the servant caught the bird by the leg. Loki could not get free.

When Geirrod had the bird, he said:

"Strange, bright-eyed feathered creature, tell me your name. The northern fields of ice are not your home. From what far country have you come?"

The bird answered never a word. Then the giant said:

"If you will not talk, you shall not eat."

So saying, he took the bird into the palace and locked him in a cage. He kept Loki in the cage for three months, without food or drink.

At the end of the three months, Geirrod opened the cage and took the bird out.

"Strange bird," he said, "your eyes are no longer bright. Perhaps you will talk now. Tell me your name."

GEIRROD CAME OUT

Poor Loki was so weak and faint from lack of food, and so tired of staying in the cage that he told his name.

"I am Loki, one of the gods from the Golden City," he said. "Pray set me free, that I may return to Asgard."

Geirrod answered: "Loki, you shall not go free until you have promised to bring the thunder-god to visit me. He must come without his hammer and belt of strength."

Geirrod wished to catch Thor and kill him, for the thunder-god's hammer had brought death to many of Geirrod's friends. The frost-giants had long been planning to kill Thor if ever they had the chance.

Loki gave his promise to Geirrod and the giant set him free. The mischief-maker flew at once to Asgard.

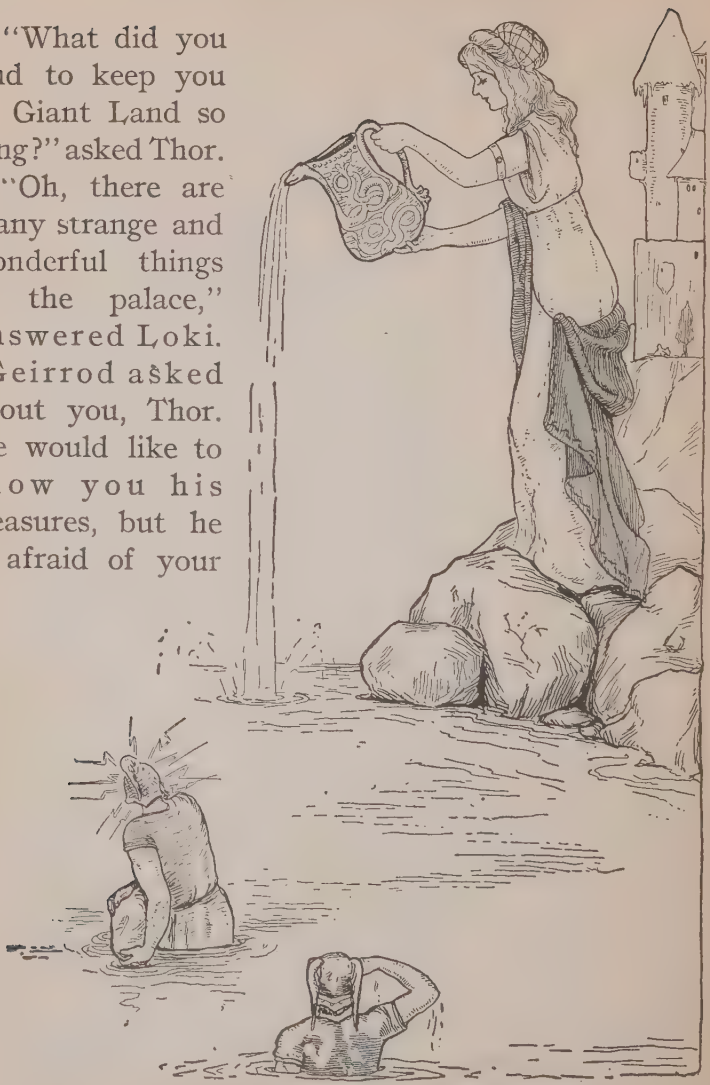
THOR'S VISIT TO GEIRROD

Loki knew that it would not be easy to get Thor to visit Giant Land without his hammer and belt of strength; but the mischief-maker knew also that he must keep his promise to the frost-giant, Geirrod. He waited until he met the thunder-god out hunting one day.

"Thor," Loki said, "I have been on a visit to Giant Land. I stayed for three months in the palace of the giant Geirrod."

"What did you find to keep you in Giant Land so long?" asked Thor.

"Oh, there are many strange and wonderful things in the palace," answered Loki. "Geirrod asked about you, Thor. He would like to show you his treasures, but he is afraid of your



ON THE BANK STOOD THE GIANT'S DAUGHTER

hammer. Leave your hammer and belt of strength at home, and go with me to visit the giant."

Thor thought that the palace of the giant must be a wonderful place, to keep Loki away for three months. The thunder-god wished to see the treasures, so he went with the mischief-maker.

The two gods were soon in Giant Land and Loki pointed out Geirrod's palace to Thor. Smoke was rising from the chimney. As they came nearer, they saw a great river between them and the palace.

The thunder-god waded at once into the river, with Loki following and holding on to him. As they waded in, the river seemed to rise. Thor looked around. On the bank stood the giant's daughter, pouring a great stream of water into the river. Loki thought they would surely be drowned.

Now, although Thor had left his hammer and belt of strength at home, he still had on his iron glove. Seizing a great rock in his hand, he threw it at the giant's daughter. The rock did not hit her, but it frightened her so that she ran back to her father's palace. Then the water in the river went down and the gods reached the other side safely.

At the palace gate, Geirrod was waiting for them. He took them into his great hall. There was only one chair in the room, and Thor, being tired from wading across the river, sat down to rest. He had no sooner sat down than the chair began to rise.

Higher and higher the chair went, until Thor was

in danger of bumping his head against the top of the hall. Then the thunder-god pushed his staff up against the ceiling with all his might.

Down went the chair, and at the same time a snapping sound was heard. As Thor looked beneath him, he saw the giant's two daughters lying on the floor with broken backs. It was they who had been holding the chair up and Thor had broken their backs in forcing it down.

Geirrod now took Thor into the next room. It was indeed a strange place. Flames of fire were leaping out from the walls on all sides.

Before Thor had time to look about him, Geirrod stepped to the far side of the room. The giant took a red-hot bar of iron from his furnace with a pair of tongs. He threw the iron bar at Thor, meaning to kill him.

The thunder-god saw the red-hot bar coming. He caught it in his iron glove and hurled it back at Geirrod. The giant held his shield in front of him; but Thor had thrown with such force that the hot bar went through the shield, striking the great fellow in the heart. The giant was turned to stone.

Thor set fire to the palace, first taking the stone giant out. He placed the giant on the top of the hill for a monument, and there his great stone head may be seen to this day by all who pass that way.

FREY AND THE LIGHT ELVES

THE goddess Freya had a brother named Frey. Frey was the god of sunshine. He was much loved by every one because of his sweet temper. He was as happy as the day was long.

When Frey was a little baby, he had a smile like sunshine. The Allfather was very fond of the baby.

"When Frey cuts his first tooth," Odin said, "he shall have a fine gift."

In those days everybody brought a gift to a baby when the first tooth came. This gift was called the tooth-gift.

The tooth-gift which Odin gave to the baby Frey was the whole country of Elfland, where the fairies lived.

"When Frey is grown up," the Allfather said, "he shall be king of the elves and fairies, and shall go to live in Elfland."

The elves were happy little creatures. They spent their time flitting about, unseen, caring for the buds and flowers.

Sometimes the elves came out in the forest at night. They danced on the grass in the moonlight, taking hold of hands and forming a ring. When they were tired, they sat down on toadstools

Wherever the fairies danced at night, the grass grew greener. Any one going through the forest

THEY DANCED ON THE GRASS IN THE MOONLIGHT

the next day could tell where the elves had been by the rings of green grass. The people said that if a man should stand in the center of a fairy ring he could see the fairies themselves.

The elves danced to very sweet music. Their music was called the Elfendance. Any one who heard the Elfendance was sure to begin dancing. He could not stop himself. If he tried to play the music he had to keep going over and over the same tune until he could play it backward. He could not stop playing unless some one cut the strings of his instrument.

When Frey, the god of the sunshine, grew up, he went to live in Elfland and became the king of the

elves just as Odin had promised he should. How happy the sunshine god was among the fairies!

Sometimes Frey went back to Asgard to visit the gods. Odin was always glad when Frey came to visit him. He gave the god of sunshine many presents.

One of Odin's gifts to Frey was the wonderful ship Skidbladnir. Another gift was the boar with the golden bristles. Frey took the gifts with him to Elfland.

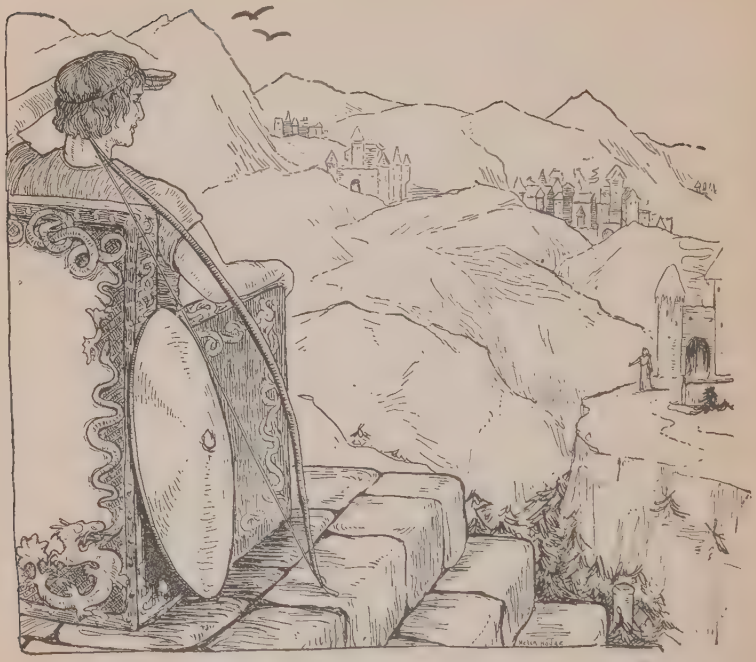
FREY AND THE FROST-GIANT'S DAUGHTER

Once when Frey was up in Asgard, he went for a walk with Odin. The Allfather was very fond of walking about with the king of Elfland at his side. This time, after walking a long while, they came to Odin's high throne, from which he could see all over the world.

"Great Allfather," Frey said to Odin. "I have often wished to sit on your high seat and look over the earth. Grant me this one wish and I shall be happy."

"No one but the Allfather has ever sat on the high throne," answered Odin. "Still, since you wish it so much, you may sit in the seat and look over the world for a short time. Be careful to see only what is good for you."

Frey climbed up into Odin's high seat. The whole



HE SAW THE FROST-GIANT'S DAUGHTER WALKING IN THE GARDEN OF THE PALACE

world with its mountains and rivers and oceans was spread out before his eyes. Far away to the north the land of the frost-giants could be seen.

While Frey was looking at Giant Land, his eyes rested on the ice palace of a frost-giant. He saw the frost-giant's daughter walking in the garden of the palace.

The maiden's name was Gerda. She was so beautiful that Frey could not take his eyes from her

face. He would have sat on the throne all day looking at her, if Odin had not called out that the time was up.

As soon as Frey came down, Odin asked: "What did you see, Frey, while you were looking around the world?"

"I saw a beautiful maiden," Frey said, "walking in a garden. I shall never be happy until I have her for my wife."

The Allfather told Frey to go back to Elfland and try to forget the frost-maiden. Frey went home, but he did not forget. He could neither sleep nor eat, but thought of the beautiful maiden all the time.

Frey made up his mind to ask her to become his wife. He did not dare to go into Giant Land himself, but he sent his servant, Skirnir.

"Skirnir," Frey said, "if you can get the frost-princess to promise to become my wife, I will give you my sword, which hangs ever at my side."

The servant took Frey's picture and a ring and some golden apples to Gerda. He told the frost-maiden that the sunshine-god wished to have her for his wife.

"I can not become Frey's wife," Gerda said, "because I am the daughter of a frost-giant and Frey is a god."

Skirnir showed Gerda the presents Frey had sent to her.

"I do not care for the presents," said Gerda. "Nor do I care to be Frey's wife."

Then Skirnir said: "Gerda, if you do not become Frey's wife, your father will marry you to an ugly old frost-giant. If you say 'yes' to Frey, you will be queen of the fairies and live in Elfland."

This made Gerda think better of Frey. She changed her mind. She said to the servant:

"Tell Frey that I will meet him in the wood in nine days and become his wife."

Skirnir went back to Elfland with the good news. It made Frey's heart glad to hear that Gerda was willing to become his wife. He gave his bright sword to Skirnir as he had promised to do. But when he heard that he must wait nine days, his face fell.

"How can I wait nine days," he said, "when one day seems like a year without her!"

The time passed very slowly. It seemed as though nine days would never be over. When, at last, they were up, Frey went to meet Gerda.

He took her to Asgard. All the gods came to the wedding. Then Frey and Gerda went to their home in Elfland. They lived happily among the fairies for many years.

HULDA AND THE GOLDEN CHIPS

ODIN'S wife, Frigga, was sometimes called by another name. In some countries the people called the goddess Hulda.

Hulda cared for the flowers and grain. As she rode over the land in her chariot, the grass grew green and the flowers sprang up in her path. The trees put forth their leaves and blossoms to greet her.

Hulda brought smiles to the faces of old and young, for the spring came with her. How glad the people were to see her riding in her chariot across the country!

Once, when Hulda was out in her chariot, one of the wheels broke. She looked about for some one to help her. Not far away she saw a small shop by the roadside.

As the goddess started toward the shop, the workman who owned it, came out. Hulda called to him.

"One of the wheels of my chariot is broken," she said. "Can you mend it for me?"

"Oh, yes," answered the workman. "I can mend wheels. I will make your chariot wheel all right, but you must pay me for it."

"You shall be paid as soon as your work is done," said Hulda. She thought it strange that the work-

man should speak about his pay before he had done his work.

The goddess watched the workman. He had to chip off some of the wood from the wheel. The pieces of wood fell to the ground. Soon the work was done.

"I think the wheel will run all right now," the workman said. "Where is my pay?"

"Here is your pay," answered the goddess, as she picked up some of the pieces of wood from the ground and handed them to the workman. Then, springing into her chariot, she rode off before he had time to speak a word.

The workman did not like his pay. He threw all the chips on the ground except two little bits which he put in his pocket.

"I will take these two pieces home," he said, "to show my wife how the goddess paid me."

The workman forgot about the chips that night, but the next morning he remembered them. Then he took the two bits out of his pocket and gave them to his wife.

"See what the goddess Hulda paid me yesterday for mending her chariot wheel," he said.

"I think that is pretty good pay," said his wife.

She gave the chips back to the workman. He looked at them and saw that they had turned into gold. How sorry he was that he had thrown away the other chips!

His wife, seeing that he still looked unhappy, asked:

"Are you not satisfied with the gold? How much pay did you think you should get for a few minutes' work?"

Then the workman told her that the goddess had given him a whole handful of chips from the wheel and that he had thrown away all but the two little bits which had turned to gold.

"Where did you throw the other chips?" asked his wife. "Perhaps they also have turned to gold."

So they went together to the spot where the chariot had stood, but, though they looked a long time, they found only bits of wood scattered around. The workman went sadly home again, but he was a wiser man.

VALI, THE YOUNG SUNSHINE-GOD

Vali was the young son of Baldur. He brought back the sunshine after the dark winter. He often visited the world of men.

Whenever Vali rode over the land, the days began to grow longer and the nights shorter. People were always glad to see Vali, for he made them think of the bright summer that was to come.

Once some people from a small town were standing on the sea-shore. They saw a little boat coming toward them. As it came nearer they could see a

shining shield fastened to the mast. The shield was as round as the sun and very bright.

The people wondered what kind of men were on the boat. They watched to see. But there were no

"IT IS VALI, THE YOUNG SUNSHINE GOD!"

men on the strange boat; neither was there any rudder. Still the boat kept on its way.

Nearer and nearer it came, until it stopped near the shore where the people stood. Some of them waded into the water and pulled the boat close to shore. Then they looked in. What was their surprise to see a beautiful little baby asleep on a sheaf of straw!

When the people saw the child in the strange boat they fell on their knees and cried:

"It is Vali, the young sunshine-god! He has come to help us. He shall be our king."

The baby was taken out of the boat and cared for by the women of the town. When he was a little older, Vali was set on the shield which had come with him in the boat and held up before the people, who called out:

"Long live our king! Hail to King Vali!"

Then they put a crown on his head.

Vali grew to be very wise and very strong. He helped the people in many ways. They all loved their young king.

But, by and by, the time came when Vali had to leave them, for he must visit other lands in other parts of the world. He called all the people to the shore. Then he placed his jewels and his shield in the magic boat and lay down beside them. Without hands or rudder, the strange boat moved itself away from shore and sailed far out to sea.

Vali was gone. The people saw their king no more, but they did not forget him. They gave the name of Vali to the month which in olden days ended on February fourteenth of our year. It is said that this was the beginning of St. Valentine's Day.

A WONDERFUL BOUQUET

ONCE a poor shepherd was hunting in the mountains. He saw a chamois just above him on the mountain-side. He tried to catch it, but it was too spry for him.

It climbed higher and higher. The shepherd followed until he was on a part of the mountain where he had never been before.

The chamois now hid in some thick bushes. When the shepherd had pushed his way through the bushes, he was surprised to see before him a door in the side of the mountain. As he went up to the door, it opened, showing a large cave inside. The shepherd stepped in.

The cave was a beautiful place. The floor was covered with gold and silver and jewels which sparkled in the light that entered through the door. At one end of the cave there was a throne of gold.

On the throne sat Hulda, the goddess of spring. Around the throne many maidens danced. They were dressed in white and carried garlands of all the flowers of the mountain-side. The goddess held in her hand a bouquet of tiny blue flowers.

Hulda spoke to the shepherd.

"It is not often," she said, "that any one finds the way to my cave. Since you have come so far to visit me I will give you a present to take home with

you, that you may always remember your visit to Hulda. Chose whatever you like best in the cave."

The shepherd looked around. His eyes fell on the gold and silver and sparkling stones, but he did not seem to care for them. All his life he had lived in the country, among growing things. He had learned to know and love every flower as well as every creature of the woods and fields.

Often on early summer mornings he stopped to admire the sparkle of the dew-drops on the grass and wild blossoms. To him such things were more precious than diamonds and gold and silver.

As the shepherd cast his eyes about the cave, his glance rested on the bouquet of blue flowers which the goddess held in her hand. He had never seen any flowers like them. They looked so pretty that he wished he could have some of them.

"Kind Hulda," he said, "I would rather have that bunch of little blue flowers which you are holding than anything else in the cave."

Hulda gave the bunch of blue flowers to the shepherd, saying:

"You have chosen well. Take the flowers and also this package of seeds."

The shepherd thanked the goddess and went home, feeling very happy. When he reached his hut, he told his wife about the wonderful cave full of gold and silver and jewels. He told her how kind the goddess had been to him.

'I WOULD RATHER HAVE THAT BUNCH OF LITTLE BLUE FLOWERS',

When he showed the bunch of little blue flowers to her, she scolded him for choosing them.

"Why did you not take something that would have made us rich?" she said. "Of what use are these little flowers?"

The shepherd told her that he thought the flowers

a very good present. He said he did not wish for anything better.

In the spring the shepherd planted the seed which the goddess had given him. He had enough seed to plant a whole field. After a while little plants came up. They grew until they were about two feet high. Then little blue flowers came out at the end of slender green stems. The plant was called flax.

The blue flowers of the flax plant covered the whole field. What a pretty sight it was! The shepherd's heart was glad as he looked upon the blossoms. But his wife said it was foolish to plant a whole field with flowers.

One night, when the flax plants were all in bloom, the goddess came. She showed the shepherd how to get the fibers from the stem of the plants. She showed the shepherd's wife how to spin these fibers into yarn. Then she taught her how to weave the yarn into linen cloth. When all was done, the goddess went away. They never saw her again.

The linen cloth which the shepherd's wife made from the flax was very strong. Nothing like it had ever been seen before. People came from far away to buy the cloth and the seeds of the flax plant.

The shepherd's wife showed the people how to spin the yarn and weave the cloth. They paid her well for her trouble. The shepherd and his wife soon became rich.

The shepherd always kept the bunch of blue flowers which Hulda had given him. Long after the blossoms were faded, he would look at them and remember how kind the goddess had been to him.

LORELEY

Loreley was a water-fairy. She lived under some rocks in the river Rhine. There was a cave of pink coral in the rocks and this cave was Loreley's home.

In the daytime, when the sun was hot, Loreley was never seen. She stayed in her cool cave under the water. Every evening, after sunset, she came up out of the water and sat on a high rock, where she could be seen in the moonlight, combing her long golden hair.

Loreley sang sweet songs while she was combing her hair. The evening breezes carried her song over the water. Whenever a boat passed up or down the river at night, the sailors listened to hear Loreley sing.

As soon as they heard the singing, they wished to see the water-fairy herself. They steered straight for the rocks where Loreley sat in the moonlight. No sailor ever came back to tell about Loreley, for every boat that steered for the rocks was dashed to pieces upon them.

Once a young fisherman, sitting on the bank of the river, heard Loreley singing. He liked her song so

well that he went every night to the same place to hear her sing. One night Loreley saw the young fisherman and talked to him.

Loreley told the fisherman the best places in which to catch fish. He was careful to throw his line

LORELEY SPRANG INTO THE CHARIOT

just where Loreley told him. He caught more fish in a day than the other fishermen could catch in a week.

One evening this young fisherman went to the river to meet Loreley and never came back to his friends. Every one said that Loreley had taken him down into her pink coral cave to live with her.

After many sailors had been lost on the rocks, the people planned to catch the water-fairy. They sent a party of soldiers in a boat to get her.

When the soldiers reached the rock, they saw beautiful Loreley with her shining hair blowing about in the breeze. They would have taken her off the rock, but she threw a magic spell over them. They could not move.

While the soldiers were watching Loreley, the water in the river began to rise. Higher and higher it rose, until it reached the top of the rock where Loreley sat.

Out of the water came a sea-green chariot drawn by two large goldfishes. Loreley sprang into the chariot and was soon out of sight. Then the water in the river went down again.

The soldiers could move once more. They went back to shore to tell the people what had happened. Loreley was never seen on the rocks again. It was said that she spent all her time in the cave with the young fisherman.

No boats were lost on the rocks after that. The sailors did not care to go near them when Loreley was not there to sing in the moonlight.

These rocks may be seen in the river Rhine to this day. If you should ever visit this river, ask some one to show you the place where Loreley sat and sang as she combed her hair in the moonlight.

THE GOLDEN CURSE

ONE summer Odin and the mischief-maker went on a journey together. Their way led them along the bank of a river. They had not walked far when they came upon an otter. The otter was just about to eat a salmon which he had caught in the river.

Loki picked up a stone and threw it at the otter. His aim was sure; his stone struck the otter and killed it. Loki put the otter on his shoulder and Odin carried the salmon which the otter had caught. As they went on their way Loki boasted that he had killed two kinds of game with one stone.

Farther on they came to a little hut. The gods were becoming tired, for it was near the end of the day. They stopped at the hut and knocked at the door.

An old man came out. His name was Hreidmar. He spoke to the travelers, asking them what they wanted. The gods said:

"We should like to sleep in your hut to-night. We will give you a good supper if you will let us stay with you until morning."

The gods then held up the otter and the salmon to show what kind of food they had with them. When the old man saw the otter, he called to his two sons, Fafnir and Regin. They came running to see what was the matter.

"Your brother Otter is dead," Hreidmar said to his sons. "These travelers have killed him."

At this, the sons laid hold on the gods and bound them with strong ropes.

When Odin saw that they were to be held as prisoners, he offered the old man money to let them go free, but Hreidmar said:

"My sons and I will not let you off unless you bring us enough gold to fill the otter's skin and cover it on the outside as well."

Odin promised to get the gold. He sent Loki to the dwarf, Andvari, who had much gold in a cave far down the river.

When Loki reached the cave, he found that the dwarf had changed himself into a fish and was swimming in the water near by. Loki went to the river and caught the fish in his hand.

"Let me go!" the fish cried out. "I am the dwarf Andvari."

"I will not let you go," Loki answered, "until you promise to give me all the gold in your cave."

Andvari was so frightened that he promised to give Loki as much gold as he wished.

Loki threw the fish on the ground and Andvari changed to his own shape again. They went into the cave together. Loki took all the gold from the cave. He did not leave one piece for the dwarf.

Just as Loki was about to go, he saw that the dwarf had a gold ring on his finger.

"Give me the ring also," he said.

Andvari did not wish to do this.

"Let me keep the ring," he begged. "It is all the gold I have left."

But Loki replied, "No, I must have the ring."

Then Andvari took the ring from his finger and threw it at Loki, saying:

"Take it and the curse that goes with it! No good shall come to the owner of the ring from this day forth. Whoever wears it shall have trouble to the ends of his days."

With these words the dwarf jumped into the river and was seen no more.

Loki took the ring and the gold to Odin, who was still lying bound with ropes in front of Hreidmar's hut. Odin was pleased when he saw the gold, for he knew they would soon be set free. He put the ring on his finger.

Old Hreidmar and his sons brought out the otter's skin. Odin filled it with gold. Then he spread the skin on the ground. There was just enough gold to cover the outside.

"The skin has now been filled and covered with gold," Odin said to Hreidmar. "We have kept our promise. Let us go free, that we may return at once to our friends."

"Not so. There is still room for more," said Hreidmar, pointing to a tiny spot that was not covered with gold. So Odin had to take the ring from his

finger and lay it on the spot which the old man pointed out.

Hreidmar was satisfied with this. He let his prisoners go and they returned to their homes.

Hreidmar and his sons were filled with delight at the sight of the gold. But it brought them no good: for the old man was killed soon after this by his sons, who fought over the gold. One son, Fafnir, was changed to a dragon which kept the golden treasure hidden in a cave. The second son, Regin, lived in a cave, too. In another story you may read about the boy Siegfried, who came to live with Regin and who afterward killed the dragon.

A SWORD IN AN OAK TREE

A VERY long time ago, in one of the Northern countries, there lived a king whose name was Sigmund. Sigmund was a good king. The people liked him. They believed that he was a grandson of Odin.

Many good stories were told about this king. When he was a young boy, he was brave and strong and showed that he would some day be a great man.

Sigmund's father was Volsung, the king of all the land. Volsung had many brave warriors who helped him in his battles. Sigmund was to become a warrior some day, too.

Volsung lived in a great house in the forest.

In the middle of the house there grew a large oak tree. The roots of the tree went down into the ground under the house.

The trunk of the tree grew through the roof, and its spreading branches shaded the whole house.

THE TRUNK OF THE TREE GREW THROUGH THE ROOF

People came from all parts of the country to see the strange oak tree growing in a house.

When Sigmund was a child, he often played around the oak tree. His little sister played with him. Sometimes they had their dinner in the great hall where the oak tree grew.

When Sigmund became a young man, he wished

to go off into other lands and fight. He asked his father for a sword.

"You must wait a while, Sigmund," his father said. "First prove your strength and then you may have a sword."

The time soon came for Sigmund to show how strong he was. His sister had grown to be a tall beautiful young woman. She was to be married to a rich prince. Her father gave her a great wedding feast. Everybody in the country around came to the wedding.

When the wedding feast had begun and all were having a good time, a stranger rushed into the house. He had a gray beard and only one eye. He wore a long coat with the hood pulled low over his face. His feet were bare.

In his right hand the stranger held a bright, shining sword which flashed in the light as he walked across the hall. He went to the middle of the house and thrust the sword into the trunk of the oak tree. Then he said to the people:

"He who pulls this sword out of the trunk shall get it as a gift from me, and will find that he never had a better sword in his hand than this one." Before any one had time to answer, the one-eyed man was gone.

The people said the stranger must have been Odin. They crowded around the tree to see the wonderful sword. The blade was stuck far into the

trunk of the great oak. Each one wished to be first to try to get the sword out.

Volsung, the king, tried first. He pulled with all his might at the sword, but he could not get it out. Each one of the warriors had his turn. Not one of them could pull the sword out of the tree. It seemed as though it would remain just where the one-eyed stranger had placed it.

Then Sigmund said, "Father, let me try to pull the sword out."

"You are only a young boy, Sigmund," Volsung answered. "How can you do what the grown-up men can not do?"

But Sigmund said, "Father, I think I can get the sword."

Then the warriors cried, "Let the boy try! It will do no harm."

Sigmund stepped up to the tree. The people were watching him. He pulled gently at the sword and drew it out as easily as though it had been loose.

Every one praised Sigmund. His father was proud of him. The people said that he was sure to be a great man.

How happy Sigmund was to have the wonderful sword for his own! He took good care of it and kept it always at his side. Many people wished to buy Sigmund's sword. He was offered three times its weight in gold, but he would not part with it.

THE OAK TREE

Then into the Volsung dwelling a mighty man there strode,
One-eyed and seeming ancient, yet bright his visage glowed:
Cloud-blue was the hood upon him, and his kirtle gleaming-grey.

* * *

So strode he to the Branstock, nor greeted any lord,
But forth from his cloudy raiment he drew a gleaming sword,
And smote it deep in the tree-bole, and the wild hawks overhead
Laughed 'neath the naked heaven as at last he spake and said:

"Now let the man among you, whose heart and hand may shift
To pluck it from the oak-wood, e'en take it for my gift."

And slowly down the hall-floor, and outward did he wend;
And none would cast him a question or follow on his ways,
For they knew that the gift was Odin's, a sword for the world to praise.

—William Morris.

SIEGFRIED IN THE WOOD

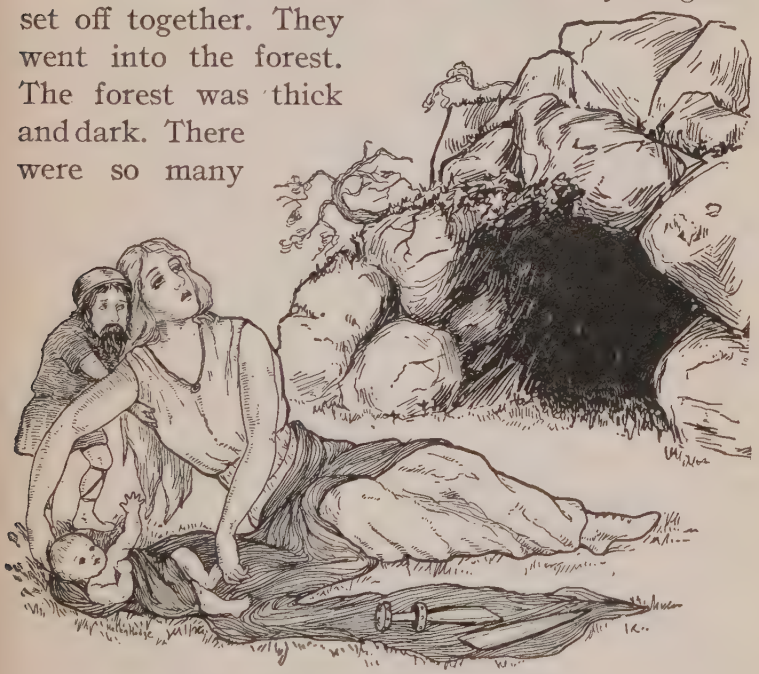
When Volsung died, his son Sigmund became king in his place. Sigmund was a brave man and much loved by all the people; but he did not live to be very old.

While Sigmund was king, he often made journeys to far-off countries. Once, when he was starting on one of these journeys, he asked his wife, Sieglinde, to go with him.

"I should like to go with you," Sieglinde said, "but I will not leave the baby."

"Well, bring the baby, too," said Sigmund. The baby was a boy. His name was Siegfried. Sieglinde wrapped the baby in a shawl and carried him in her arms.

So Sigmund and Sieglinde and the baby Siegfried set off together. They went into the forest. The forest was thick and dark. There were so many



HE HELPED SIEGLINDE TO RISE

bushes there that it was not easy to get through. Sigmund went ahead with his sword and made a path for his wife. It was slow work. They traveled all day. Toward evening they came to an open place in the forest. They sat down to rest.

They had not been there long when they heard sounds of some one coming through the bushes. Two men jumped out from among the trees. Then more men jumped out.

The men were robbers. They sprang at Sigmund. Sigmund raised his sword. He killed two men, but there were so many of the robbers that he could not stand against them. The robbers broke his sword into picees. Then they dragged him off into the bushes and killed him.

Poor Sieglinde was left alone with the baby. How frightened she was! She did not know what to do.

It had grown quite dark. Sieglinde was afraid the robbers might come back and take the baby from her. So she started to go back home for help. But first she picked up the pieces of Sigmund's sword and wrapped them in the baby's shawl.

Sieglinde stumbled along in the darkness. She could not find her way. She was lost in the thick wood.

At daylight she came to a cave in the side of a hill. She was so weak and tired that she fell to the ground.

The dwarf Regin lived in the cave. He came out to see who was passing through the forest. He saw the poor woman and the baby lying on the ground. He helped Sieglinde to rise and led her into his cave. There he showed her a bed of dry grass,

on which he told her to lie down. Then he carried her baby to her.

Regin saw that the poor woman was very ill. He was kind to her and took good care of her; but, in spite of all he could do, Sieglinde died. Before she died, she told the dwarf who she was and gave him the pieces of Sigmund's sword to keep for the baby, Siegfried.

The baby was now without either father or mother. At first the dwarf did not know what to do with him. He thought he would get rid of the child. He took the baby up in his arms and looked at him. Siegfried smiled at Regin. Then the dwarf said:

"I will keep this child for my own. He looks strong and healthy. Perhaps when he grows up he may be able to help me. When I am too old to work, he can work for me."

So Siegfried lived with Regin in the cave in the forest. The child played all day long among the trees. The birds and squirrels were his playmates. At night he lay on a bed of moss in the cave.

Siegfried grew to be a tall, strong boy. The dwarf told him nothing about his father and mother. He did not show Siegfried the pieces of his father's sword, which were hidden in the cave.

SIEGFRIED MAKES HIS SWORD

SIEGFRIED lived very happily in the forest with the dwarf. Regin spent much of his time at the anvil, for he was a smith. He could make wonderful things and he taught Siegfried to make them too.

When Regin was not working at the anvil, he went hunting. When Siegfried was old enough, he went with the dwarf on his hunting-trips.

Regin would kill wild animals and Siegfried would help to drag them to the cave. They used the flesh of the animals for food. They roasted the meat over a fire. From the skins of the animals Regin made clothes for himself and Siegfried.

When Siegfried was a little older, he learned to kill the animals without the dwarf's help. Then he often went hunting alone, while Regin stayed at the cave.

Siegfried was so strong that he could walk up to a wild animal and kill it without an arrow. He could lift a bear or a wolf and carry it home on his back.

One day, when Siegfried had grown to be almost a man, the dwarf said:

"Siegfried, I think you should have a sword to carry with you in the wood."

"A sword is just what I have wished for," replied Siegfried, "but it must be sharp and strong."

The next day, while Siegfried was out hunting, Regin made a sword. He worked hard at it and by night it was ready.

Toward evening the dwarf heard Siegfried blowing his horn, which he carried with him whenever he went into the wood. Siegfried blew the horn to let Regin know where he was.

The dwarf ran to meet Siegfried, calling out:

"Look, Siegfried, here is a sword for you. I made it to-day."

Siegfried took the blade in his hand.

"It seems quite strong," he said. "I will try it."

Siegfried was standing beside a big rock. With the sword he struck this rock a heavy blow. The sword broke into a thousand pieces.

"You must make a stronger sword for me," said he. "A sword is of no use unless it is strong as well as sharp."

The next day, while Siegfried was away, the dwarf made another sword. When Siegfried came home, Regin said:

"Siegfried, try this sword. It is stronger than the first one."

So Siegfried tried the second sword. He struck it against the rock. The sword broke into pieces at the first blow. It was no better than the first one had been.

The third day, while Siegfried was off in the wood, Regin brought out the pieces of the sword which

had belonged to Siegfried's father. He tried to fasten the pieces together.

The dwarf worked hard all day pounding on his anvil. He made the woods ring with the noise of his hammering, but he could not fasten the pieces together.

At night when Siegfried came home, he found the dwarf still working. Regin told Siegfried what he had been trying to do.

"These pieces can be fastened together," he said, "but I am growing old and my hand is no longer steady. I have not the patience for the work."

Then Siegfried said: "My hand is steady. I think I can fasten the pieces together. Let me try."

The dwarf gave the pieces of the sword to Siegfried, saying:

"To-morrow, Siegfried, I will go into the woods to hunt and you may stay here and make yourself a sword."

The next morning, as soon as the dwarf had gone, Siegfried started to work. He tried a plan which he had thought out in the night. He took the pieces of the sword, one at a time, and filed them into a fine powder. Then he melted the powder in an iron pot over a fire. When the powder had melted into a solid lump, he let it cool somewhat. Then he hammered it out on the anvil. He soon had a bright, shining sword with a very sharp edge.

The dwarf came home early.

"Siegfried," he said, "what have you done to-day?"

"I have made a sword," said Siegfried. "See what a sharp edge it has!"

Regin looked at it; then he said:

"Show me what you can do with your sword. Perhaps it is not so strong as it looks."

Siegfried took the sword in his hand. He struck it with all his might against the rock. A strange thing happened. Instead of the sword being broken into pieces, the rock was cut in two.

Then Siegfried struck the sword against the iron anvil. The anvil, too, was broken in half. The sword was not harmed.

The dwarf saw that Siegfried had a wonderful sword. He was sure that the boy would some day be a great man.

Siegfried asked the dwarf where the pieces of the sword had come from.

"Those were pieces of your father's sword," Regin said. "Your father was a great king. He was killed by robbers, who broke his sword into pieces. Your mother brought the pieces to me. I have kept them for you all these years."

When Siegfried heard that his sword was made from the pieces of his father's sword, he said:

"I will never part with this sword. I will keep it always at my side. I will try to be brave like my father."

SIEGFRIED KILLS THE DRAGON

After Siegfried had made his wonderful sword and had heard the story about his father and mother, he did not care to live in the cave in the forest any longer. One day he said to Regin:

"I am tired of hunting and killing wild animals, Regin. Let me go out into the world and make myself useful."

The dwarf did not like to lose Siegfried, now that the boy was able to help him.

"If you wish to make yourself useful," he said, "I can tell you of something which no one has ever been able to do."

"Tell me what it is," cried Siegfried. "I can do it, for I am very strong and you know I am not afraid of anything."

"In this forest," the dwarf said, "there is something which frightens every one. It is a great, ugly dragon. The dragon is larger than the largest snake, and has thick scales all over its back. Its breath is hot like flames of fire. Its tail lashes from side to side as it crawls along.

"The dragon lives in a cave near the river, in a part of the forest in which you have never been. Inside the cave the dragon has much gold and silver and many beautiful jewels. No one dares to go near the place."

"Show me where the cave is," cried Siegfried. "I will kill the dragon."

So they set out together to find the cave where the dragon lived. They walked a long way.

When they reached the darkest part of the forest, the dwarf said to Siegfried:

"Do you see those tall trees among the thick bushes? The dragon's cave is just beyond, and here is the path along which the huge creature crawls every evening when he goes down to the river for water."

Siegfried looked around. He thought of a good way to kill the dragon. He first dug a large hole in the path. Then he covered the hole with the branches of trees, so the dragon could not see that anything was wrong.

When all was ready, Siegfried called to Regin, saying:

"Come, we will get down into the hole. When the dragon reaches us, I will stick my sword through the soft part of his body." But Regin ran off.

"Oh, no!" he called back to Siegfried. "I will wait off here. You may get into the hole if you wish." The dwarf was afraid to be so near the dragon.

Siegfried did not fear anything. He slid down into the hole alone. He covered himself with leaves and waited for the dragon to come along the path on its way to the river for water.

Pretty soon Siegfried heard the dragon coming. He heard the sound of its scales scraping on the rocks and its tail lashing from side to side. He saw flames of fire coming out of the dragon's mouth. What if the fire should burn him!

When the dragon was just over the hole, Siegfried pushed the sword up with all his might. The sword went straight through the dragon's heart. Then what a roaring and howling and rolling there was! It was soon over. All was still. The dragon lay dead.

Siegfried climbed out of the hole. He went up to the dead dragon and pulled the sword out of its body. In doing this he got a drop of the dragon's blood upon his finger. It made his finger sting.

Siegfried put his finger into his mouth, to stop the stinging. The moment his tongue touched the dragon's blood, Siegfried found that he could understand what the birds were saying as they chirped and twittered in the trees above him. He listened to them. They were talking to him.

"Siegfried," they said, "do not take any of the gold out of the dragon's cave. There are three things in there which will be worth more to you than gold. There is a helmet for your head. It is called the 'Helmet of Dread.' It will keep you from all danger. The second is a shield which no sword can pierce. The third is a magic ring which will take you through fire and water without harm. Take only these three things."

SIEGFRIED PUSHED THE SWORD UP WITH ALL HIS MIGHT

Siegfried did as the birds told him. He went into the cave. It was dark and slimy and slippery. It was full of gold and silver.

Siegfried did not take anything but the helmet, the shield, and the ring. He put the helmet on his head and the ring on his finger. He held the shield in front of him.

When Siegfried came out of the cave, Regin ran up to him. The dwarf had a cup in his hand. He gave the cup to Siegfried, saying:

"Drink this, Siegfried. You must be thirsty after your hard work."

Siegfried took the cup. He held it to his lips. Just as he was about to drink, he heard the birds speaking to him.

"Siegfried, do not take a drink," they said. "There is poison in the cup. The dwarf is trying to kill you, so that he may have the gold in the cave for himself."

When Siegfried heard this, he threw the cup to the ground. The dwarf saw that he was found out. He sprang at Siegfried. There was a long fight. At last Siegfried won and Regin lay dead on the ground.

Before Siegfried went off, he pulled the body of the dragon across the entrance of the cave. He left it there so that no one would dare to go into the cave after the gold. Then he started off to give help wherever it was needed.

SPAKE the Wise One:
"Dig a pit in the highway, and a grave in the serpent's path:
Live thou therein, O Siegfried, and thine hope from the gloom-
ing hide,
And be as dead for the season, and the living light abide!

—WILLIAM MORRIS: *Sigurd the Volsung.*

SIEGFRIED AWAKENS BRUNHILD

AS SIEGFRIED walked through the thick wood, he looked around to see what further use he could make of his sword. Everything about him was still. Not even a wild animal crossed his path.

Siegfried walked all day. By evening he was very tired; so he lay down to rest on the soft grass under a tall tree. He slept soundly all night.

At daylight he was awakened by the singing of the birds in the branches over his head. He could understand what they were saying.

One of the birds spoke to him. It said:

"Siegfried, if you wish to be of use in the world, we can tell you one thing to do. There is some one in trouble in this wood. Some one is lying asleep on the top of a grassy hill around which a hot fire is burning. Nobody has yet been brave enough to go through the fire to awaken the sleeper."

Siegfried jumped up.

'Show me where the hill is," he said. "I will go through the fire and awaken the sleeper."

The bird answered, "Siegfried, you must hunt for the hill." Then the bird flew away.

Siegfried set off to find the hill with the fire burn-

SIEGFRIED WENT NEARER

ing around it. He walked a long way. By and by he saw smoke ahead of him.

He ran toward the smoke. There was the hill, just as the bird had said, and the fire burning on all sides. Siegfried walked around the hill to find a

place to get through the fire. The flames and smoke encircled the hill. There was no break in the circle.

Siegfried closed his eyes and ran straight through the flames and smoke. As soon as he was inside the ring of fire, he opened his eyes. He had not been harmed by the flames. The fire seemed to die out behind him.

Inside the circle the grass was green. A horse was grazing on the hillside. Siegfried climbed to the top of the hill. He saw some one lying there asleep.

The sleeper was dressed in armor and looked like a warrior. Siegfried went nearer. Then he saw, instead of a warrior, a beautiful sleeping maiden, with long golden hair.

Siegfried cut open the armor with his sword. The maiden awoke. Siegfried saw that her eyes were blue. He stepped to one side. The maiden first knelt on the ground with her eyes toward the rising sun. Then she turned and saw Siegfried.

The maiden told Siegfried that her name was Brunhild, and that she had been placed on the hill by her father. He had told her not to go to war, but she had gone. He had taken this way to punish her.

Brunhild had been sleeping many years on the hill-top. She had been waiting for some one brave enough to come through the fire and waken her.

Siegfried was glad that he had found her. He

had never seen any one more beautiful. He gave her his ring.

By and by Siegfried left Brunhild, but he promised to come back.

He found many ways in which to make use of his sword. He won in every battle. After a while he came back for Brunhild and made her his wife.

Now he comes to the mound and climbs it, and will see if the man be dead;
Some king of the days forgotten, laid there with crowned head,
Or the frame of a god, it may be, that in heaven hath changed his life.

So he draweth the helm from the head, and, lo, the brow snow-white,
And the smooth unfurrowed cheeks, and the wise lips breathing light;
And the face of a woman it is, and the fairest that ever was born,
Shown forth to the empty heavens and the desert world forlorn.

—William Morris.

ASLOG AND THE HARP

Siegfried and Brunhild had a little daughter named Aslog. She had curly golden hair and smiling blue eyes. Everybody loved her.

Aslog lived in a fine palace with her father and mother. They had many servants. Among the servants was an old man who played on the harp. The harp-player's name was Heimir.

Old Heimir was very fond of little Aslog. He often took her on his knee and told her stories. Sometimes he played on the harp for her. Aslog liked to hear the old man play on his harp.

When Aslog was about four years old, her father was killed by some robbers. Aslog's mother was so sad because of the loss of her husband that she died soon after Siegfried was killed. Poor little Aslog then had neither father nor mother.

After Aslog's father and mother were dead, the robbers came to the palace to take whatever they could carry away. They would have killed little Aslog, too, if it had not been for old Heimir, the harp-player.

Heimir saw that it was not safe for Aslog to stay in the palace. So he took the child into the forest. He took his harp with him.

Heimir was afraid the robbers might follow him and take little Aslog away. He thought of a way to hide the child. His harp was as tall as he. He had made the back of it to open like a door. There was an empty space within, and there he could carry his belongings.

Heimir opened the door of the harp and placed Aslog inside. Aslog was a tiny thing. She could sit down inside the harp.

Then old Heimir locked the door and put the key into his pocket. He would not let Aslog come out of the harp when any one was near.

ASLOG WAS A TINY THING

Sometimes when they were in the thick woods, Heimir opened the door. Then Aslog jumped out and played among the flowers and birds.

Heimir tramped from place to place with little Aslog in the harp. Whenever they stopped at a farm-house or in a village he would play and sing. The people would come out to listen to the harp-player. Then Aslog would peep through a crack in the harp. She could see the people, but they could not see her.

The people gave Heimir money and food for his singing and playing. Heimir saved the best food for little Aslog.

Once when Heimir was playing for the people, he sang a sad song. He made up the song as he went along. It was about a little girl who had lost her father and mother. The song was so sad that Aslog began to cry. Then Heimir sang in a louder voice. He was afraid that the people would hear Aslog crying.

The singing and crying together made the people very sad. They all began to cry.

"What a wonderful singer Heimir is!" they said. "He makes even his harp cry."

The people asked Heimir to sing another song, but he would not sing again. He took up his harp and went into the forest.

When Heimir reached the thickest part of the wood, he took Aslog out of the harp. He told the

little girl how frightened he had been when she was crying.

"Aslog," he said, "you must promise not to cry again when strange people are near."

Aslog promised to keep quiet. Then Heimir lifted her on his lap. He sang to her until her blue eyes closed and she was fast asleep. Then he laid her on the mossy ground to finish her nap. When Aslog awoke, Heimir placed her in the harp, and they went on their way.

ASLOG IN THE FOREST

Toward evening Heimir found himself in the middle of the forest. He looked about for some place to stay for the night. Not far off he saw a peasant's hut. When he knocked at the door, an ugly old peasant woman opened it.

"What are you doing here in the woods?" she asked.

"I am a poor harp-player," answered Heimir. "I have come from a far-off land. I am very tired and should like a place to sleep to-night."

"You may not stay here. We have only one bed," said the old woman.

"I will pay you if you will let me sleep under your roof to-night," said Heimir.

Then the old woman told him that he might sleep on some straw in the loft. She showed him the

way. Heimir climbed up the ladder that led to the loft. He took his harp with him. He was soon fast asleep.

By and by the old woman's husband came home from chopping trees in the forest. The old woman told her husband about the harp-player.

"I think the harp-player is very rich," she said. "I saw some gold lace through a crack in his harp. I believe the harp is filled with gold. Let us kill the harp-player and get the gold for ourselves."

So they climbed into the loft. There lay Heimir, asleep on the straw, and near him a little golden-haired girl. How surprised the peasant and his wife were to see the child!

The peasants killed poor old Heimir as he lay sleeping. Then they looked inside the harp. But they found no gold.

The man would have killed the little girl, too, but his wife stopped him. She had never seen any child so pretty as Aslog with her golden hair and her dress worked with gold threads.

"I will keep the child to help me with my work," the old woman said.

Aslog did not wish to stay with the peasant and his wife. She cried for old Heimir, but she never saw him again.

The next morning the old woman put a coarse dress on Aslog. She had hidden away everything that belonged to the harp-player.

"You must never tell any one how you came here," she said to Aslog. "Your name now shall be Kraka. You must say that you are my child. The harp-player will never return; and if you do not do as you are told, you will be killed."

The poor child was made to work very hard. She was afraid of the old man and his wife. Sometimes she cried all night. How unhappy she was!

FORCE rules the world still,
Has ruled it, shall rule it;
Meekness is weakness,
Strength is triumphant,
Over the whole earth
Still it is Thor's day!

ASLOG AND KING RAGNOR

IT WAS not often that any one came through the forest where Kraka lived with the peasants. Whoever passed that way was sure to stop to look at the pretty child. Sometimes people would say:

"How can that beautiful little girl be the child of those ugly old creatures?"

Kraka worked and played in the fresh air every day. She had the flowers and the birds and other wild creatures for her friends. She grew to be a tall, strong girl.

One day, when Kraka was about seventeen years old, a ship sailed up a creek not far from the peas-

ants' hut. It had come into the creek because of a storm on the sea.

The owner of the ship was king Ragnor Ladbrog. The king was on board the ship. He had been far off on the sea. He was hungry. He wished for some fresh bread.

On the ship there was no oven in which to bake the bread. So the king sent his sailors with some flour to the peasants' hut.

The sailors knocked at the door. The old peasant woman opened it. The sailors said:

"We have come to ask you to bake some bread in your oven. Our king is hungry for some fresh bread."

"I have no time to bake bread for your king," said the old woman.

The sailors were turning to go back to the ship, when Kraka spoke to them.

"Give me the flour," she said. "I will make the bread for your king."

The sailors watched Kraka make the bread. How beautiful she looked! Her long golden hair shone in the sunlight and her blue eyes smiled as she worked.

When the bread was ready, Kraka put it in the oven, telling the sailors to watch it. Then she left them and went off into the forest.

When Kraka was gone, the sailors forgot about the bread. They could think only of Kraka and her

golden hair and blue eyes. They had never seen so beautiful a girl before.

When they at last opened the oven, the bread was burned. It had to be thrown away. The sailors went back to the ship for more flour.

The king scolded the sailors for letting the bread burn, but they said:

"O king, we saw the most beautiful girl at the hut! Her name is Kraka. We could think of nothing else after we had seen her. You would forgive us if you could see her."

"Bring this girl to the ship," said the king. "If she is as beautiful as you say, I will forgive you."

The sailors went back to the hut. They took more flour with them. This time Kraka not only made the bread, but watched it while it was in the oven.

When the bread was done, Kraka gave it to the sailors. They said it was the finest bread they had ever seen. They asked Kraka to help them carry it to the ship. Kraka was glad to help the sailors carry the bread. She went to the ship in her coarse working-dress.

When Ragnor looked at Kraka, he saw that she was indeed beautiful. He told the sailors that he would forgive them for letting the bread burn.

King Ragnor asked Kraka to come on board the ship. He talked with her a long time. She told him that her real name was Aslog. She told the king about her father and mother.

After the king had heard her story, he said:

"Aslog, you shall not go back to live in the forest. I will take you away on the ship with me."

So Aslog sailed off on the ship with King Ragnor. How glad she was to get away from the old peasant and his wife!

When the king came to his own land, he took Aslog to his palace. He made her his queen. They were very happy together. The people loved the queen because she was so kind and good.

HOW FRITHIOF EARNED HIS SWORD

The old Norsemen, you remember, were fond of sailing over the sea to strange lands. Their leaders were brave men who had no fear of the stormy deep. As you have heard, these leaders were sometimes called Vikings.

Each Viking had a ship of his own and many men who followed him wherever he chose to lead them. Some Vikings had a number of ships, which were always kept close together as they sailed over the water.

These Vikings sailed off to many strange lands. They learned much about the people in the lands they visited. No matter how far they sailed across the sea, they were glad to return to their homes after a time.

One of the bravest of the old Vikings was Sigurd.

Sigurd sailed off every year in his ships with his men. The ships sailed to far-off lands. The men followed Sigurd wherever he went. They called him their chief. They liked him because he was strong and brave.

When they were not sailing over the sea, the men lived in Sigurd's palace. In the palace there was a large hall with long tables at each side. The men sat at these tables for their meals. Each man had his place.

The chief, Sigurd, sat at a table at one end of the hall. The chief's table was raised up above the others. He could see all of the men from his high seat.

Sigurd wore a long blue cloak with a gold border. He had eagle feathers in his cap.

Each man, as he came in to dinner, hung his sword and shield on the wall back of his seat. At night the men lay down to sleep on the floor of the hall.

One day after dinner Sigurd said to his men: "To-morrow we shall sail off over the sea. We may be gone a long time. Make ready your swords and shields and say farewell to your wives and your children."

The men shouted for joy. They were glad to go. They loved the sea.

In the hall, among the men, sat a boy. His name was Frithiof. Sigurd was his uncle.

Frithiof heard what the chief said about the morrow. He saw how happy the men were to make

ready for the ship. Frithiof wished that he might go with them. He did not like to be left behind with the women and children.

When the men had become quiet, Frithiof spoke to Sigurd, the chief.

"Uncle," he said, "let me go with you on the ship to-morrow. I am strong and not afraid of anything. I may be of some use to you."

"No, Frithiof," Sigurd said, "I can not let you go with us. You are but a boy. I know you are strong and brave, but it would not be fair to ask grown-up men to fight by the side of a boy."

Then some of the men cried out, "Let the boy go! We do not care."

But the chief said, "No, Frithiof has not yet carried a sword. Perhaps next year when he has proved his strength and earned his sword, he may go with us."

Just then a knock was heard at the door. A stranger came in. He looked like a beggar. The chief told the men to give the stranger something to eat and a place to rest for the night.

After a while all the men lay down to sleep. The lights were put out. The men were tired. The chief was tired, too. They slept soundly.

But the boy Frithiof could not sleep. He was still wishing that he might go with the men in the morning. He was wondering how he might prove his strength and get his sword.

By and by Frithiof heard a sound. Some one was moving. A man was coming down the hall. It was the stranger. He had a knife in his hand. Frithiof knew that the stranger was a robber.

Frithiof lay still and watched. The robber looked at each man, to make sure that all were asleep. When he came to Frithiof, the boy closed his eyes.

The robber passed on. Frithiof rose up. He took the sword of the man who lay nearest to him. He crept softly after the robber.

The robber went to the end of the hall, where Sigurd lay asleep. The robber held his knife over the chief, and was about to kill him when Frithiof ran up behind him. Frithiof thrust the sword into the robber's back just in time to save his uncle, the chief of the Vikings.

Then Frithiof cried out, "Help! help! Here is a robber." The men jumped up. They seized their swords and ran to the end of the hall. There lay the robber, dead. Frithiof had saved the chief's life.

The men praised the boy.

"He is the bravest among us," they said. "Give him a sword, Sigurd. He must sail with us on the ship to-morrow."

Then Sigurd, the chief, said: "Frithiof, you have done a brave deed to-night. You have earned your sword. Make ready to go with us in the morning. We shall be proud to have you on the ship with us."

The next morning Sigurd gave Frithiof a sword

and a shield for his own. Frithiof went with the men to the ship. He hung his shield on the side of the ship just as the men did.

The ship had thirty-two oars. It had bright-colored sails. On one sail was the picture of Odin's eight-legged horse.

This ship, like most of the old Norse ships, was made in the shape of a great fish or sea-dragon, with the head at one end and the tail at the other.

Frithiof liked to sit near the sea-dragon's head and watch the waves. He thought of the strange lands that he had heard about from the men and hoped that he, too, might some day be able to tell wonderful tales of the strange sights he had seen. How happy he was when they sailed far away over the sea!

THE LONGBEARDS

Odin, the Allfather, was sometimes called the god of war. All good warriors, before a battle, prayed to Odin to be on their side and help them in the fight.

At one time two armies were camped on the battle-field, ready for a fight. One army belonged to a people called the Vandals and the other army belonged to the Winilers. Both the Vandals and the Winilers wished to rule over the land; and as neither side would give up anything to the other, they had

to go to war to settle the matter. The Vandals had more men, but the Winilers were very brave.

On the evening before the battle the Vandals went to Father Odin and prayed him to give them the victory.

"Your enemies the Winilers are brave men," the war-god said. "It is hard to tell to which army the victory belongs. I shall wait until the morrow to choose. The men who first come before me in the morning shall win in the fight."

The Vandals returned to their camp. They felt sure they would win, for their men were to march to the gates of Odin's palace at daylight.

The army of the Winilers did not go to Odin, but sent their men to Mother Frigga, the Allfather's wife. The Winilers said to the goddess:

"Pray ask Odin to give us the victory. We have not so many men as the Vandals and we need help. It will go hard with our women and children if we fail to win."

The Winilers had their families with them, and when Frigga saw the little children she felt sorry for them. She took the side of the Winilers.

"It is of no use to go to Father Odin to-night," the goddess said. "He has said that he will give the victory to the army which first appears before him in the morning."

Then the Winilers cried out: "Great goddess, help us. Without Odin, we can not win the battle."

Then kind Mother Frigga thought of a plan.

"Get your women together," she said, "and arm them like the men with shields and swords. Let them part their hair in the middle and draw the ends around under their chins to look like beards. When all are ready, come to the palace and stand under the east window just at sunrise."

The Winilers did as the goddess told them. Each woman armed herself with a sword and a shield, and parting her hair in the middle, drew the ends around under her chin, to hang down like a beard.

EACH WOMAN ARMED HERSELF

The women made queer-looking warriors. When they stood with the men on the east side of the palace, the army looked twice as large as before.

Mother Frigga did not sleep much that night. She was thinking of her plan for the Winilers. Early in the morning the goddess awoke. The All-father had not yet opened his eyes. So Frigga moved his couch over to the east window, from which he liked to watch the sunrise.

In a short time Odin awoke. He looked out of the window. The sun was just rising and there in the dim light stood the army of the Winilers. Odin laughed when he saw them.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he said. "What strange long-bearded warriors are these?"

"You have well named them," said Frigga. "Long-beards they are and Longobards let them be called. Now give them the victory in the battle."

Father Odin remembered his promise.

"So let it be," he said. "My help shall go to the Longobards."

That day the great battle was fought. The long-bearded warriors won, for Odin fought with them.

After the battle, Odin did not forget the people whom he had helped. He watched over them and blessed them in many ways.

He brought happiness to their children in later years, for he gave them a home in the sunny South on the plains of the country we call Lombardy.

These people kept the name which Odin gave them. Ever after they were known as Longobards or Lombards, which means the same thing.

THE MAN WHO LIVED FOR THREE HUNDRED YEARS

The three Norns—Urd, Verdandi and Skuld—did not spend all their time caring for the great ash tree, nor in weaving wonderful webs across the sky. These three sisters often took time to visit the land of men. They never failed to be present at a house where there was a birth or a death.

Whenever a child was born, the parents and friends watched for the Norns to appear. They wished to hear what the three sisters had to say about the new baby.

If the sisters were pleased with the child, they would foretell a life of happiness; but if they were not well treated, they would have nothing good to say.

Once a prince was born in one of the northern countries. Many people came to look at the new baby. While they were gathered around the mother's bed, the three Norns came in.

The people made room for the sisters at the bedside. They placed chairs for them to sit on. Every one waited to hear what the Norns would say for the young prince.

The first sister, Urd, began to speak. Every one

looked at her. She was a strange old woman, for she kept turning her head backward.

"This is my gift to the young prince," she said. "He shall become a wise man and shall have great riches."

This pleased all the people; and the mother smiled to think of the happiness in store for her son.

The second sister, Verdandi, next came forward. She was young and pretty, and looked straight ahead.

"The young prince shall be both handsome and brave," she said.

At this the people clapped their hands and crowded around the bed to get another look at the baby prince.

As they did so, they knocked the third sister, Skuld, off her chair. This sister always wore a veil over her face. No one could see what she looked like, but by her voice the people could tell how she felt.

Skuld showed at once that she was angry at being pushed from her chair. She moved nearer to the bed and said in a harsh voice:

"You seem to take little notice of me. I will not give anything good to this child. He shall live no longer than the burning of the candle at his bedside." At this she turned and walked away.

The people, hearing these words, began to cry and sob, for the candle at the bedside was nearly burned

out. The mother pressed the babe to her breast and called after Skuld: "Oh, spare my child! Spare his life a little longer!"

Skuld would not return; but Urd, who had promised wisdom and riches to the child, sprang to the bedside. She did not intend to have her gift to the prince spoiled by her angry sister. She seized the candle and blew it out. Then she handed it to the weeping mother, saying:

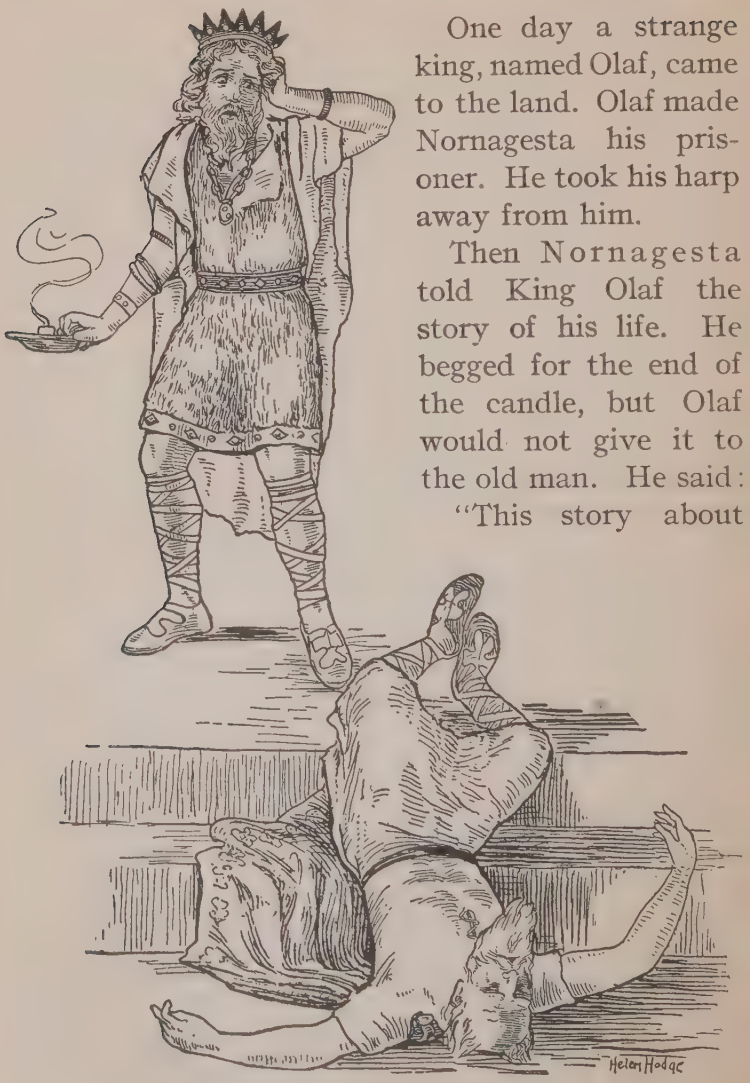
"Keep this piece of candle for the prince. As long as it remains unburned he shall live. When he is tired of life, he may burn it out. His life will go out with the candle."

Urd and Verdandi then followed Skuld out of the house. The mother kept the piece of candle. She would not let any one touch it. The prince was named Nornagesta.

Nornagesta grew to be very handsome. He became a brave and wise man. After his father died, he was made king. He had great riches and fought in many wars.

He kept the piece of candle always with him. When he became an old man, he made a harp and hid the piece of candle in it.

By and by all Nornagesta's friends died, but he lived on and on. He was not quite tired of life. It is said that he lived to be three hundred years old. There was no longer any one living who could remember when he had not been an old man.



THE DEATH OF NORNAGESTA

One day a strange king, named Olaf, came to the land. Olaf made Nornagesta his prisoner. He took his harp away from him.

Then Nornagesta told King Olaf the story of his life. He begged for the end of the candle, but Olaf would not give it to the old man. He said:

"This story about

the candle is foolish. There can be no truth in such a tale."

So he had the bit of candle lighted. Nornagesta, seeing this, began to tremble. His white head fell over on his chest. Just as the candle burned out he fell dead.

Many people were sad to hear of the death of the old man, but some said that if he had lived three hundred years he had lived long enough.

HOW THE SEA BECAME SALT

THE god Frey, who was king of the fairies, had a son named Frodi. Frodi became king of one of the far northern countries. He was well liked by his people.

Although Frodi lived in the land of men, he had many friends among the fairies and dwarfs. The dwarfs were very fond of him because he had done a great deal for them.

One day the dwarfs came to Frodi with a present. The gift which they brought to him was a magic grindstone. The owner of the grindstone had only to wish and sing as he turned the stone, and he would at once have whatever he wished for.

Frodi thanked the dwarfs for the present, and after they had gone, he thought he would make use of the grindstone. He tried to turn the stone, but he could not. It was too heavy for him. Then he called for some of his men to help him. They tried

with all their might to turn the grindstone, but they could not move it.

A short time after this, as Frodi and his men were tramping over the country, they came to the house of a giant who had two daughters named Menia and Fenia. The giant was not at home. Frodi saw that the young women were large and strong, so he and his men took Menia and Fenia prisoners.

"These strong young women may be able to turn my magic grindstone," Frodi said.

He took them to his palace and told them to turn the grindstone. Menia and Fenia took hold of the handle and the grindstone at once began to whirl round and round.

Then Frodi said to the sisters: "Sing a song, wishing happiness and gold for King Frodi."

Menia and Fenia did as they were told. This is the song they sang as they turned the wheel:

"We grind for Frodi
Wealth and happiness,
And gold abundant
On the mill of luck;
Dance on roses!
Sleep on down!
Wake when you please!
That is well ground."

As the song went on the gold began to roll down from the grindstone, and Frodi danced for joy. It gave him great happiness to see the gold and hear it

jingle upon the floor of the palace. By and by there was a great pile of gold, and Frodi's men were kept busy storing it away.

Toward evening Menia and Fenia became hungry and asked for something to eat, but Frodi said:

"Do not stop to eat. Grind on at the gold."

The sisters had to do as they were bid, for they were Frodi's prisoners.

After a while the sisters became tired and sleepy. They asked for a bed for the night, but Frodi had become so greedy for gold that he said, "Do not stop to sleep. Grind on at the gold." The sisters had to obey.

At midnight King Frodi himself became sleepy. He lay down on a couch to rest, while the gold rolled on. Menia and Fenia watched Frodi and waited until his eyes were closed in sleep. Then they changed the song. This is what they sang as Frodi slept:

"Grind soldiers, tall and brave. Quick! Quick! Quick!"

All at once the jingle of the gold stopped, and off from the wheel jumped soldiers with swords and shields.

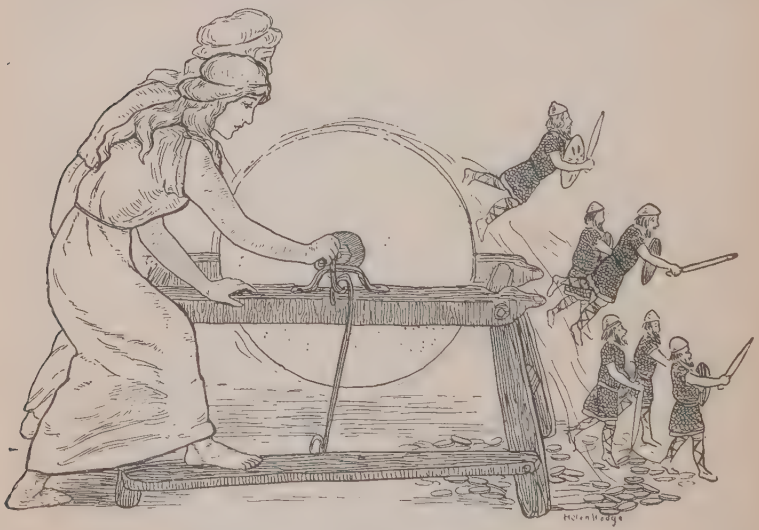
Menia and Fenia kept on grinding soldiers until the whole palace was full of them. Then the sisters stopped to rest.

The soldiers killed King Frodi and all of his men who were in the palace.

Then they said: "We will find a new king for the land."

The soldiers left the palace and went to look for a new king. They went down to the sea-shore.

Beside the shore was a ship that had just come in The captain of the ship called to the soldiers and



FROM THE WHEEL JUMPED SOLDIERS

told them that his name was Mysingir. The captain looked brave, so the soldiers said, "Let us make Mysingir king."

As soon as Mysingir became king, he heard about the magic grindstone and the two sisters. He began at once to plan to make use of the magic wheel.

"I will place this grindstone on my ship," he said,

"and the sisters shall grind salt, which shall be carried to all parts of the world. I shall become known in all lands."

Mysingir did as he had planned. He placed Menia and Fenia on the ship with the grindstone. Then he and his men set sail. When they were out at sea, Mysingir said to the sisters, "Grind salt."

Menia and Fenia did as Mysingir asked them to do. They ground salt all day.

By night there was a great pile of salt on the ship. Menia and Fenia became tired at last, and asked for food and a bed for the night; but Mysingir, too, had become greedy and he told the sisters to keep at work, grinding salt.

Seeing that they were to have no rest, Menia and Fenia ground salt with all their might. Faster and faster the stone went round! Higher and higher the salt piled upon the ship! The sisters would not stop.

The ship became so heavy with the load of salt that it sank into the deep sea, carrying all on board down with it. As the ship sank, the grindstone still kept whizzing around. The waters were churned into a great whirlpool, and all the sea was filled with salt.

Some people in that far-off country say that the sisters are still grinding salt in the place where the ship sank, and, if you do not believe them, they will show you the whirlpool called Maelstrom.

FOUR CHARIOTS

THE Norsemen had many strange tales about the lights in the sky and how they were kept in place. They said that the sky was held up by four strong dwarfs. These dwarfs were placed at the four corners of the earth.

The names of the four dwarfs were Nordri, Sudri, Austri, and Vestri. It is from these dwarfs that we get our names of the four points of the compass — north, south, east, and west.

The lights in heaven were made from sparks of fire. The sparks were given to the gods by the flame giant, Surtur. The largest giant sparks were used for the sun and the moon. The stars were made from the small sparks.

The gods placed the sun in a chariot. The sun-chariot was drawn by two strong horses. The horses were named Early Waker and Rapid Goer.

The gods soon found that the sun-chariot was too hot for the horses. So they fastened air-bags to the animals' feet, to keep them cool. Then they placed a shield in front of the chariot to keep the hot rays of the sun from burning the horses.

The moon was placed in a car drawn by a horse called All-swift. All-swift did not need a shield to keep the moon's rays off, for they were mild and pleasant.

When the chariots of the sun and the moon were ready, the gods looked about to find drivers for the horses. They went to an old giant who had a son and a daughter. The daughter's name was Sol. The gods gave the sun-chariot to Sol to drive. The son's name was Mani. Mani was given the moon-car to drive.

Sol and Mani had trouble with the horses at first, but they soon learned to keep the chariots in the straight path across the heavens. How fine it seemed to ride so high above the earth! How close they were to the clouds and the stars!

Once when Mani was driving the moon car across the sky, he saw a little boy and a little girl down on the earth. The boy and the girl were carrying a pail. They were both crying.

Mani brought the moon-car down near to the earth. Then he called to the boy and the girl.

"Dear children," he said, "what is the matter? Why do you cry?"

"We are crying," answered the boy, "because our father makes us carry this pail of water all day and all night, too."

"That is hard work," said Mani. "I feel sorry for you. How would you like to come with me for a ride in the moon-car?"

"Oh, we should be glad, indeed, to go with you," replied the children.

So Mani took the two children up in the moon-

SOME PEOPLE CAN STILL SEE THE BOY AND THE GIRL
UP IN THE MOON

car. It was great fun to ride in the chariot with the gentle moon. Mani kept the children in the moon-car to help him.

Some people can still see the boy and the girl up in the moon carrying the pail of water between them. This tale is something like our story of Jack and Jill.

The sun-chariot and the moon-car were chased at all times by two hungry wolves. The wolves tried to catch the chariots. Whenever the sun or the moon failed to shine, the Norsemen said that the wolves had swallowed the chariots.

There were two other chariots that rode across the sky, the night-chariot and the day-chariot. The night-chariot was driven by Nott. A coal-black horse pulled it along. From this horse's mane dew and frost fell down upon the earth. The horse was called Frost-mane.

Nott, the driver of the night-chariot, had a son. Her son's name was Dag. He was very handsome. The gods gave Dag the day-chariot to drive.

A white horse drew the day-chariot. From his beautiful mane rays of light shone, cheering the whole earth. Dag called his horse Shining-mane.

Many hearts were made glad when Dag drove Shining-mane across the sky. The day-chariot was more welcome than Nott's black horse with the night-chariot.

BALDUR'S DREAMS

BALDUR, the sun-god, was the favorite child of Odin and Frigga. He was best loved of all the gods. Baldur had never been known to speak an unkind word.

Whenever Baldur walked through the golden streets of Asgard, he had a smile and a pleasant word for every one. It made the gods happy to have him among them. He seemed to carry the sunshine with him.

As you know, Baldur had a blind brother named Hodur. The sun-god was very kind to this brother.

One day, when the gods looked at Baldur, they saw that his face was sad.

"Baldur," they said, "why are you sad? We have never seen you with a sad face before."

"I had some bad dreams last night," Baldur answered.

Then the gods all cried, "Baldur, tell us your dreams."

But Baldur could not tell them his dreams. He could not remember what his dreams had been about. His friends tried to cheer him. They hoped that he would feel happier the next day. But the next day Baldur still looked sad.

"Baldur," the gods said, "have you been having bad dreams again?"

"Yes," Baldur answered, "I had very bad dreams last night. What troubles me most is that I can not remember my dreams."

All day Baldur kept trying to remember what he had dreamed in the night.

The third morning Baldur's face was so pale and sad that all the other gods were frightened.

"Baldur," Mother Frigga said, "what is the matter?"

"Oh, mother!" said Baldur. "I dreamed last night that I was going to die."

Then the faces of all the gods became sad, for they had great faith in dreams. They were sure that their dear Baldur must die.

Mother Frigga cried: "I can not bear to have my best-loved child die! I will go all over the earth and ask everything living and dead to promise not to kill Baldur."

Frigga went first to the forest. She said to the trees, "Will you promise not to kill my son Baldur?"

The trees all said, "We will not harm Baldur, for he has been kind to every living thing."

Then Frigga asked the river to promise to do no harm to her dear son.

"No harm shall come to Baldur from water," the river said, "for he has never been unkind to any creature."

Mother Frigga next went to the fire.

"Our flames and smoke shall do no harm to

"WILL YOU PROMISE NOT TO KILL MY SON BALDUR?"

Baldur," said the fire, "for he speaks only kind words to every one."

Frigga went to the rocks and the stones. They gave their promise not to harm Baldur. She went to the weeds and the herbs that grew by the wayside. All were glad to make the same promise.

When Mother Frigga came back, she said to the gods:

"Be joyful with me! Baldur shall not die. All

things, living and dead, have promised not to harm my son. Fire will not harm him. Water will not drown him. Stones and rocks will not hurt him. Wood will not touch him. He shall not be poisoned, for the weeds and herbs, too, have promised not to do him any harm."

The gods were glad to think that Baldur was not to die. The sun-god smiled and was happy again.

Every morning Baldur went out to the play-ground to take part in the games with the other young gods. One day, when the gods had become tired of playing, Loki thought of a new game.

The mischief-maker said: "Since everything has promised not to harm Baldur, let us try throwing sticks and stones at him. Let us see whether they will keep their promise."

"That will be a fine game," cried all the others.

They placed Baldur in the middle of the play-ground. Then they took turns in throwing at him sticks and stones and anything else they could find. Everything they threw fell to the ground without touching him. Nothing would harm him.

The gods liked the new game so well that they played it every day. The Allfather and Mother Frigga used to go to the play-ground to watch the game. Baldur seemed to enjoy the fun more than any one else.

BALDUR'S DEATH

One day, when the gods were playing at their game of throwing things at Baldur, Loki came along. The gods spoke to Loki, but they did not ask him to play with them, for he was always making trouble.

Loki was much displeased to be left out of the game. He saw that all the gods loved Baldur, but would not have anything to do with the mischief-maker.

There came into Loki's head an evil plan which brought great sorrow to the gods.

He left the play-ground and went off where no one could see him. He put a shawl over his head and dressed himself to look like a poor old woman.

Then he went to Mother Frigga's palace. The goddess was sitting inside, spinning golden thread. When Frigga saw the old woman, she spoke kindly to her and asked her to come in and rest.

Loki kept the shawl over his head. After a while he said in an old woman's shaking voice:

"Is it true, Mother Frigga, that everything has promised not to harm your son Baldur?"

"Everything has promised," replied Frigga, "except the little mistletoe plant which grows on an oak tree near the rainbow bridge just outside of Asgard. It is so small that I did not ask it to promise."

Loki did not wait to hear any more. He said

good-by to Frigga and hurried to the woods, where he pulled off his dress and shawl. He was soon down by the rainbow bridge looking for the oak tree on which the mistletoe grew.

His sharp eyes spied the little vine clinging to the trunk of the oak tree far above the ground. Loki climbed up the tree. He broke off a small piece of the mistletoe and wound it around a sharp arrow.

Then the mischief-maker ran back to Asgard, where the gods were still having a good time throwing things at the sun-god. Seeing that Baldur's blind brother, Hodur, was not playing, Loki went up to him and said:

"Hodur, why do you not join in the game and throw something at Baldur?"

"Oh, I have nothing to throw," answered Hodur, "and besides, I can not see to take aim."

"That will not matter," said Loki. "Come with me and I will help you to throw something."

Loki gave Hodur the little arrow to throw. He held the blind brother's arm so that the arrow would go toward Baldur. Blind Hodur threw the arrow and Loki ran off.

The arrow carrying the bit of mistletoe went straight to Baldur's heart. The beautiful sun-god fell to the ground dead.

There was great sorrow in Asgard. Weeping and wailing could be heard all over the city. The golden roof of Odin's palace rang with sobs and cries.

When the Allfather saw that Baldur was dead, he told the gods to get ready for the funeral. It was sad work.

Early the next morning the gods went into the forest and cut branches from the trees. They dragged the branches to the sea-shore, where Baldur's ship was drawn up on the land.

They piled the branches on the ship, crossing one stick over another. Then the sun-god's body was brought to the ship and laid on top of the branches.

When everything was ready the gods came to take a last look at Baldur. Each god brought a present to place on his ship.

The sun-god had been so dearly loved and had had so many friends that there was a great crowd on the sea-shore. His ship was covered with jewels, golden rings, swords, and many other presents.

The gods set fire to the pile of branches and started to push the ship out into the sea. The ship was so heavy with presents that they could not move it. They sent for a giant to help them.

When the ship was out in the sea, the wind blew the fire into great flames. The pile of branches burned, then Baldur's body, and in the end the ship itself.

The gods stood on the shore and watched the ship as it drifted farther and farther away, until it looked like a small speck of fire on the sea. At last the ship sank out of sight. Then the gods went home. Their hearts were sad because of the loss of Baldur.

BALDER DEAD

So on the floor lay Balder dead; and round
Lay thickly strewn swords, axes, darts, and spears,
Which all the Gods in sport had idly thrown
At Balder, whom no weapon pierced or clove;
But in his breast stood fixt the fatal bough
Of mistletoe, which Lok the Accuser gave
To Hoder, and unwitting Hoder threw—
'Gainst that alone had Balder's life no charm.
And all the Gods and all the Heroes came,
And stood round Balder on the bloody floor,
Weeping and wailing; and Valhalla rang
Up to its golden roof with sobs and cries.

* * *

And thus the father of the ages spake:—

* * *

. . . "To-morrow, when the morning dawns,
Bring wood to the seashore to Balder's ship,
And on the deck build high a funeral pile,
And on the top lay Balder's corpse, and put
Fire to the wood, and send him out to sea
To burn; for that is what the dead desire."

—Matthew Arnold.

But from thy lips, O Balder, night or day,
Heard no one ever an injurious word.

—Matthew Arnold.

Be ye then kind, as Balder, too, was kind.

—Matthew Arnold.

In Hoder's hand the hero's doom;
His brother sends him to the tomb.

—Thomas Gray.

THE JOURNEY TO THE SPIRIT WORLD

The gods were sad and lonely after Baldur's death. They missed the sun-god's smiling face.

The gods went to the Allfather and said:

"We can not get along without Baldur. Our hearts are sad all the day."

Odin answered, "I will send a messenger to the Spirit World to ask Queen Hela to let Baldur come back."

Then Odin called Hermod, his messenger, and said to him:

"Take my gray horse, Sleipnir. Ride quickly to the Spirit World and ask Queen Hela to let Baldur come back."

Hermod saddled Sleipnir, the eight-footed horse, and jumped on his back. Away they went over hills, through valleys, and across roaring streams. For nine days and nine nights Hermod rode toward the northern fields of ice.

On the tenth morning he came to the river which flows by the Spirit World. He saw the bridge of crystal hung by a single hair. There was no other way to get across the stream. So Hermod rode over the bridge. How it shook as Sleipnir's eight feet flew along!

At the farther side of the bridge the guard stopped Hermod and asked:

"Who are you? What is your name? Yesterday five troops of dead soldiers passed over this bridge. They did not shake it as much as you alone, and you have flesh on your body and color in your cheeks.

"I have come from Odin with a message for Queen Hela," Hermod answered. "I am riding Odin's horse, Sleipnir."

Then the guard let Hermod pass on.

Far on to the north over fields of ice he rode until he came to a high wall. There was no gate in the wall. Hermod stopped to see that the straps on Sleipnir were tight. Then he made the horse leap over the wall.

Inside the wall there was a thick wood of bare trees. Hermod could see the dark spirits of the dead people flitting about. He did not stop to speak to the spirits, but went straight to Queen Hela.

The queen of the Spirit World sat on a throne. When Hermod saw her, he fell on his knees and said:

"Queen Hela, I have come from the gods to ask how we may get Baldur back. We long to see his bright smile and hear his kind words again. He does not belong in this dark place. You would never miss him."

Queen Hela made answer thus:

"If the gods can prove to me that Baldur is so much loved, I will give him back. Let everything, living and dead, weep for Baldur. If one thing fails to weep, Baldur must stay with me."

Hermod thanked Queen Hela. He rode back to Asgard. He was in so great haste to tell the good news that it took him only two days to return from the Spirit World.

Hermod told the gods what Queen Hela had said. When the gods heard how they could get their dear Baldur back, they saddled their horses and rode over the land to tell every one to weep for Baldur. North, south, east, and west they went, asking the people to shed tears.

Every one was willing to shed tears for Baldur. How the people had missed his kind words and pleasant face! It brought the tears to their eyes to think of his sad death.

As the gods rode on they could hear the sound of weeping behind them. All over the world there was a dripping sound of tears falling for Baldur. It was just such a sound as is heard at the end of winter, when the snow begins to melt and slide down from the house-tops.

After the gods had ridden over the earth, they started back. Their hearts were joyful to think that Baldur would soon be with them again. They said, "Perhaps Baldur may be with us tomorrow. We must make ready to welcome him." Then they planned games they would play and feasting they would have when their loved sun-god should return. As they neared the Golden City, they passed a dark cave in which an old bent woman was sitting.

The gods asked the old woman to weep for Baldur, but she would not.

"Let all things weep for Baldur if they will," she said, "but I will never shed one tear."

Then the gods saw that the old woman was really

"I WILL NEVER SHED A TEAR"

Loki. Thus, because of one person, Baldur was lost to Asgard.

The gods were now even more sorrowful than before. They began to plan how to punish Loki, the cause of all the trouble.

BALDER DEAD

JOURNEY TO THE DEAD

And grave replied the solemn queen:

* * *

"Come then! if Balder was so dear beloved,
And this is true, and such a loss is Heaven's—
Hear, how to Heaven may Balder be restored.
Show me through all the world the signs of grief!
Fails but one thing to grieve, here Balder stops!
Let all that lives and moves upon the earth
Weep him, and all that is without life weep;
Let Gods, men, brutes, beweep him; plants and stones,
So shall I know the lost was dear indeed,
And bend my heart, and give him back to Heaven."

* * *

And all that lived, and all without life, wept.
And as in winter, when the frost breaks up,
At winter's end, before the spring begins,
And a warm west-wind blows, and thaw sets in—
After an hour a dripping sound is heard
In all the forests, and the soft-strewn snow
Under the trees is dibbled thick with holes,
And from the boughs the snowloads shuffle down;
And, in fields sloping to south, dark plots
Of grass peep out amid surrounding snow,
And widen, and the peasant's heart is glad—
So through the world was heard a dripping noise
Of all things weeping to bring Balder back;
And there fell joy upon the Gods to hear.

—Matthew Arnold.

LOKI'S PUNISHMENT

After Baldur's death, the Allfather called the gods together and said to them:

"Loki must be punished for his evil ways. We will put an end to his mischief. Go, hunt for him until you find him."

When Loki heard that the gods were looking for him, he kept away from the Golden City. He thought of a way to hide himself.

He went up on a very high mountain where no one had ever been before. Near the top of the mountain he built himself a hut with four doors. The first door faced the north, the second the south, the third the east, and the fourth the west. He kept the four doors open day and night. If anybody came to one of the doors, Loki could run out the other way.

Upon the mountain Loki spent his time making queer fishing-nets. With the nets he caught fish in the waterfall on the other side of the mountain.

One day the gods found their way up the mountain to Loki's hut. Loki heard them coming and ran off to the waterfall. He changed himself into a salmon, jumped into the water, and hid himself under a large stone.

When the gods came to the hut, they said:

"Now we have the mischief-maker. Here is his hut."

They looked inside, but Loki was not there. They saw the fish-nets on the floor.

Then the gods said, "Perhaps Loki has changed himself into a fish. Let us take one of the nets and look for him in the waterfall on the other side of the mountain."

The waterfall was not far away. As soon as the gods reached it, they held the net across the stream of water so that all the fish which came that way would be caught.

Loki was afraid to hide under the stone any longer. He tried to pass the net, but he could not get through. Then he tried to jump over the net, but the gods saw him coming and held the net up higher. The salmon was caught.

When the net was pulled out of the water and Loki saw that he could not get away, he changed himself back into his old form. He knew that his time had come.

"We have you at last, Loki," the gods said. "You shall never make mischief again. Come with us."

They carried the mischief-maker to a dark cave in the side of the mountain. They bound him hand and foot with an iron chain and fastened him to a rock.

Above Loki's head the gods placed an ugly serpent. The serpent kept dropping poison on the body of the evil god night and day. Whenever a drop of poison touched Loki, it would sting so that he had to cry out with pain.

His wife, Sigyn, took pity on him. She stood beside him and held a cup over his head to catch the poison before it dropped on his body.

No matter how tired or sleepy she was, Sigyn never left Loki. Only when the cup became full she stepped aside to empty it. Then a few drops of the poison would drop on Loki's head. He could be heard from far away, howling with pain and trying to get free.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS AND THE LAST GREAT BATTLE

After Loki had been chained, the gods hoped to live in peace; for they knew that the mischief-maker could never again trouble them with his tricks. They thought of the good old times when all were happy together, and wished that the same joyful days might come again.

But this was not to be. The gods could no longer be altogether contented, even in their golden palaces among the trees with the shining red-gold leaves. The trouble which Loki had caused had not been overcome by his punishment. Baldur, the beautiful sun-god, was dead. His warming smile would never greet the gods again.

Worse than this, the evil which Loki had begun lived on. It took root in the hearts of men. They forgot the things that were good and right and just.

They became greedy and selfish and unkind. They began to quarrel with one another. Brothers fought with brothers and fathers with children. Everywhere battles were being fought and people were warring with one another.

At the same time many strange things happened. There came a long cold season, so cold that no one could remember anything like it. Biting winds rushed over the land. The air was filled with thick clouds of snow. The moon and the stars were hidden. Darkness covered the land.

This cold season lasted for three years. All over the world there was suffering from cold and hunger. Even the golden palaces of the gods were bitterly cold.

Then there came a short summer, when the gods took heart.

"The long, cold winter is ended," they said. "We shall never see another like it. All will be well with us again."

But the great Allfather, Odin, who knew all things that had been and that were to come, shook his head sadly. As he sat on his high seat and looked off over the earth, he said:

"No, it can never be well with us again. The world has been filled with evil. The end of all things is near at hand. The next three years will be colder than the three that have just passed."

These words saddened the gods. They lost all

hope, for they knew that it must happen as the Allfather had said. Tears filled their eyes. They threw themselves on their golden couches. The roofs of the golden palaces rang with sobs and cries.

The Allfather tried to quiet them.

"My children," he said, "we must wait patiently for the end. Fear not but for the evil in your hearts. Prepare yourselves to fight for the right."

The next three years were one long, terrible winter. The whole land was locked in ice and snow. The rivers were still. The waterfalls were silent.

Unheard-of things happened at this time. The stars left the earth and the moon was swallowed by the wolf which had so long been chasing it. The earth shook. Mountains crumbled into the sea. Then there came a great crash. Everything seemed to be falling to pieces.

Heimdall, the wonderful watchman of the gods, felt the rainbow bridge tremble as he rode back and forth over it. He held his trumpet to his mouth, ready to sound the last call.

As he did so, he saw far out on the ocean a great ship of frost-giants coming toward the Golden City. Then he blew a blast on his trumpet that was heard all over the world.

The gods sprang up from their couches. They jumped on their horses and galloped across the rainbow bridge toward a great field of ice.

At the same time Loki broke his chains and made

HEIMDALL BLEW A BLAST ON HIS TRUMPET

haste to meet the gods. Fenris, the wolf, burst the magic chain which held him and came howling over the land.

The Midgard serpent, which circled around the earth, leaped out of the sea and crawled over the ice and snow. Queen Hela came up from the dark Spirit World with her fierce dog, Garm.

SURTUR SET FIRE TO THE GOLDEN CITY

The great flame-giant, Surtur, came with his sons from the fiery under-world.

Then began the last great battle that the gods were ever to fight. It was a battle between the good

and the evil. The battle-field was on an icy plain, called Wigrid. It was one hundred miles square. Loki led the wicked ones in the fight. He was helped by the serpent, the wolf, the frost-giants, and Queen Hela with her dog, Garm. The battle was long and bloody.

Odin fought bravely against the wolf Fenris, but in the end the Allfather was swallowed by the fierce creature. Thor fought and killed the Midgard serpent, but the serpent dropped some poison on the thunder-god and Thor died.

Nearly all the gods were killed in the battle. When the fight was over, the flame-giant, Surtur, set fire to the Golden City of the gods and to the Spirit World. The whole earth was wrapped in the flames. The ash-tree was no more.

> The sun grows dark,
> The earth sinks into the sea,
> The bright stars from Heaven vanish;
> Fire rages,
> Heat blazes,
> And high flames play
> 'Gainst Heaven itself.
>
> —ELDER EDDA: *The Vala's Prophecy.*

Then came the great flood. The water covered the earth. After many days a new earth rose out of the water.

Vidar, the forest-god, and Hoenir, the god of motion, spread life and greenness over the new earth. Of

the other gods, only Baldur and his brother Hodur, Vali and the two little sons of Thor were saved from the battle and fire and flood.

Besides these gods, one man and one woman were saved. They had been put to sleep in a boat by wise old Mimir, and had not been awakened until the new earth was green and beautiful.

Baldur the good ruled over the new earth. There was no more cold, nor was ice ever seen again. The year was one long summer. There was peace and happiness and love everywhere, for all the evil had been washed away.

THE WORLD'S AGE

WHO will say the world is dying?
Who will say our prime is past?
Sparks from Heaven, within us lying,
Flash, and will flash till the last.

—CHARLES KINGSLEY.

THE NAMES OF THE DAYS OF THE WEEK

THE people in the countries of the Far North did not forget their gods. For hundreds of years the tales about them were passed from father to son.

The people honored some of the gods more than others. Baldur, the sun-god, was the best loved of all because he brought the sunshine and the warm summer. The people built many temples in his name.

Baldur is not forgotten in the Far North to this day. There is a little white flower which the people call Baldur's eye. The flower grows wild on the hillsides and looks something like a daisy. The people named the little flower for Baldur because it looked so bright and pure.

Some other pretty flowers are called Freya's hair. A number of poisonous weeds are named after Loki. One of the highest mountains is called Thor's hat. The sea-sponge, which grows in the deep sea, is called Niord's glove.

These people named the days of the week after their gods. Tuesday was Tyr's day. Tyr or Tiv, as he was sometimes called, was remembered because he had lost his hand in the mouth of Fenris the wolf. Every good warrior had Tyr's name on his sword, to help him to become brave like the sword-god.

Wednesday was Odin's or Wodin's day. The father of the gods was sometimes called Wodin instead of Odin. In all their battles warriors called on Odin to help them to win.

Thursday was Thor's day. By the name of this day the strong thunder-god who frightened the frost-giants with his red-hot hammer was given honor.

Friday was named for Frigga, the cloud goddess and wife of Odin. Some of the brightest stars in the sky were called "Frigga's Spinning Wheel."

Saturday was Saeter's day. Saeter was the god of the harvest. He cared for the grain and other growing things.

Sunday took its name from the sun, and Monday from the moon. The people liked to see the sunshine. How happy they were when they could feel its warm rays! It helped them to forget the cold and darkness of the long winter.

More than a thousand years have passed since the people of the North believed in Odin and Thor and Baldur, but they still love to tell the stories about them.

We have not forgotten the sturdy old Norsemen who were among the bravest of our forefathers. We still call the days of the week by the names of their gods, and read with pleasure the very old tales from the Far North.

PRONUNCIATION OF PROPER NAMES

KEY: The symbols used in the respelling for pronunciation are those given in Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, as follows:—

ā as in *ate*	ī as in *ice*	o͞o as in *food*
á as in *add*	ı̂ as in *tribunal*	o͝o as in *foot*
ä as in *arm*	ĭ as in *ill*	ou as in *out*
à as in *ask*		
a as in *final*	ō as in *old*	ŭ as in *up*
ą as in *awe*	ȯ as in *obey*	
	ô as in *order*	g hard as in *go*
ē as in *eve*	ŏ as in *odd*	j for g as in *gem*
ē as in *create*		s sharp as in *this*
ĕ as in *end*		z for s as in *is*
ẽ as in *ermine*		

Ægir (ā′jēr): the sea-god.
Andvari (änd-vä′rē): the dwarf from whom Loki got the gold with which to pay Hreidmar.
Asgard (ăs′gärd): the city of the gods.
Aslog (à-slôg′): the daughter of Siegfried.
Austri (ou′strē): one of the dwarfs who held up the sky.

Baldur (bäl′dēr): the sun-god.
Baugi (bou′gē): a giant, the brother of Suttung.
Brunhild (bro͞on′hĭld): the maiden who was wakened by Siegfried.

Dag (däg): the driver of the day-chariot.
Dvalin (dvä′lĭn): the dwarf who made Sif's golden hair.

Fafnir (fäf′nēr): one of the sons of Hreidmar.
Fenia (fēn′ı̂-à): one of the giant maidens whom Frodi took prisoners.

Fenris (fĕn′rĭs): Loki's wolf.
Frey (frī): the god of summer.
Freya (frī′ȧ): the goddess of beauty.
Frigga (frĭg′gȧ): the wife of Odin.
Frithiof (frĭt′yŏf): a Viking hero.

Garm (gärm): the dog that guarded the bridge leading into the Spirit World.
Geirrod (gīr′rŏd): the frost-giant who wished Thor to visit him.
Gerda (gĕr′dȧ): the frost-princess whom Frey loved.
Gunlad (goōn′lăd): Suttung's daughter.

Heimdall (hīm′dăl): the guard of the rainbow bridge.
Heimer (hīm′ĕr): the old harp-player who cared for Aslog.
Hela (hĕl′ȧ): the Queen of the Spirit World.
Hermod (hĕr′mŏd): the messenger of the gods.
Hodur (hō′dĕr): the blind god.
Hreidmar (hrīd′mär): the dwarf whose son Loki killed.
Hrungnir (hroōng′nĕr): the largest of the frost-giants.
Hulda (hŭl′dȧ): Frigga.
Hymir (hē′mĕr): the frost-giant who owned the kettle Mile Deep.

Idun (ē′doōn): the guardian of the golden apples.

Kraka (krä′kȧ): the name by which the peasants called Aslog.

Loki (lō′kē): the mischief-maker among the gods.
Loreley (lō′-rē-lī): a water-fairy.

Magni (măg′nē): Thor's little son.
Mani (măn′ē): the driver of the moon-chariot.
Menia (mĕn′ĭ-ȧ): one of the giant maidens whom Frodi took prisoners.

Midgard (mĭd′gärd): the land of men.
Mimir (mē′mēr): the keeper of the well of wisdom.
Mysingir (mē′sĭng-ēr): the captain of the ship which was sunk by the load of salt.

Niörd (nyĕrd): the wind-god.
Nordri (nôr′drē): one of the four dwarfs who held up the world.
Nornagesta (nôrn′ä-gĕs-tä): the man who lived three hundred years.
Norns (nôrnz): the three sisters who tended the great ash tree, Urd, Verdandi and Skuld.
Nott (nŏt): the driver of the night-chariot.

Odin (ō′dĭn): the Allfather.
Odur (ō′do͝or): the god of the summer sun.

Ragnor Ladbrog (räg′nôr läd′brŏg): a Viking chief.
Regin (rā′gĭn): a son of Hreidmar.
Roska (rēs′kä): the peasant girl who went to Giant Land with Thor.

Saeter (sā′tēr): the god of the harvest.
Siegfried (sēg′frēd): the slayer of the dragon Fafnir.
Sieglinde (sēg-lĭn′dä): the mother of Siegfried.
Sif (sĭf): Thor's golden-haired wife.
Sigmund (sĭg′mo͝ond): the father of Siegfried.
Sigurd (sē′go͝ord): Siegfried.
Sigyn (sē′gēn): Loki's wife.
Sindri (sĭn′drē): the dwarf who gave the dwarfs Thor's hammer.
Skadi (skä′dē): Thiassi's daughter.
Skidbladnir (skĭd-bläd′nēr): the ship given the gods by Andvari.
Skirnir (skēr′nēr): Frey's servant.

Skuld (skōōld): one of the Norns.
Sleipnir (slīp′nēr): Odin's horse.
Sol (sōl): driver of the sun-chariot.
Sudri (sōō′drē): one of the dwarfs who held up the world.
Surtur (sŏor′tēr): one of the flame-giants.
Suttung (sŏot′tōong): the giant who stole the mead from the dwarfs.
Swadilfari (swä′dĭl-fä′rē): the horse of the giant who built the wall around Asgard.

Thialfi (tē-älf′ē): the peasant boy who went to Giant Land with Thor.
Thiassi (tē-äs′sē): the frost-giant who carried Loki off.
Thor (thôr): the thunder-god.
Tyr (tēr): the sword-god.

Urd (ŏord): the oldest of the Norns.

Valhalla (väl-häl′lä): Odin's palace.
Vali (vä′lē): the sunshine-god, son of Baldur.
Valkyrs (väl′kērz): Odin's warrior maidens.
Verdandi (vĕr-dän′dē): one of the Norns.
Vestri (vĕs′trē): one of the four dwarfs who held up the world.
Vigrid (vĭg′rĭd): the field on which the last great battle took place.
Vikings (vī′kĭngz): sea-rovers of the Far North.
Volsung (vōl′sŏong): the father of Sigmund.

S0-DTR-912